

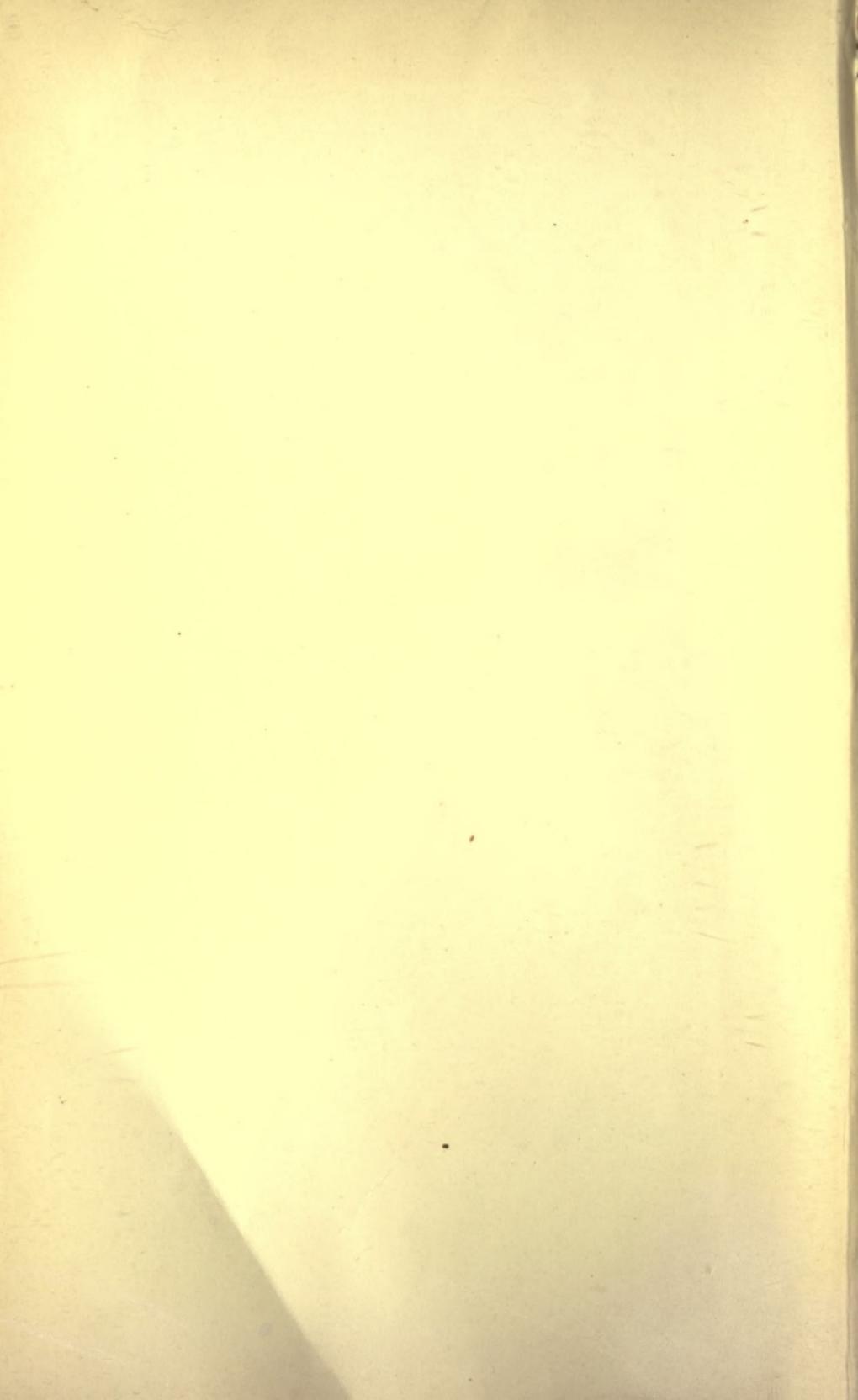
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LIFE OF JOHN LINNELL





JOHN LINNELL AS A YOUNG MAN.
(From an unfinished drawing by himself.)

THE
LIFE OF JOHN LINNELL

BY
ALFRED T. STORY



IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I.

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LIFE OF JOHN LINNELL

INTRODUCTION.

IN the following pages I have sought to tell the story of a life which is almost unique in its simplicity of purpose, in its fidelity to conviction, and in the singleness of aim with which its aspirations in art were worked out. In doing so it has been my aim to depict the real man, to show what he was, and what were the means by which he attained his ends. The story will bear telling fully, not merely in regard to what made him a great painter, but also in regard to the influences that made him a true man. For John Linnell's greatest glory lay not so much in having given noble and inspiring pictures to the world, but in having lived a life that was marked by the strictest adherence to principle from beginning to end. In recording the facts of that life, I have not tried to soften them down; I have not set myself to justify this or that belief, nor to prove that he was right in his views on this subject or the other. Every man is a unity in himself, and

so must look at the world of things about him from his own standpoint; and what is chiefly of interest to his fellow-beings is to learn how those things struck him, and in what way they influenced him.

Some of John Linnell's views will doubtless be repugnant to many; to others there will be points of sympathetic contact—here with his almost absorbing love of Nature, there with his serene religious trust. So, while some will be charmed with his art, others may find it not altogether to their taste; but even these cannot fail to admire the strenuousness with which for years he laboured to attain his ends.

Possibly some may say that I have gone into matters which were not necessary, and that I have in consequence been led into trivial details. My answer is that I wished to bring before my readers the whole and the real man, believing that by so doing I should confer a greater benefit upon the world than by producing something partial and incomplete.

There are too many such so-called Lives going about. If we write biographies, we should at least write them truly and boldly. But the fashion is to produce them as the photographer produces his pictures of 'beauties,' softening down harsh features, heightening favourable ones, making the eyes into 'orbs,' and often fitting on the arms, neck, or shoulders of another, because more plump and 'becoming.' This is false portraiture, whether it be the method of photographer or painter. It is

equally to be deprecated when adopted in literature. John Linnell always condemned the method in portrait-painting ; and if he could be consulted now as to the way in which the story of his life should be told, he would undoubtedly say, ‘ Describe me exactly as I was.’

The story is one which carries us back to the period when the foundations of modern landscape art were being laid—when Turner and Constable were still in their teens, and ere Cotman and Cox had turned their attention to art. At the time that Linnell first saw the light, Gainsborough had been dead four years, John Crome was in his twenty-third year, and George Morland in his twenty-ninth, while Cozens in two years more was to close his career in the madhouse. His life, therefore, which ended in 1882, covered nearly the whole period of modern landscape art, from its rise almost to the present day. That he takes a high place in its growth and development no one competent to judge will deny ; and though his influence upon art was retarded in comparison with that of some of his contemporaries, it was not the less potent in the end. Why this was the case will duly appear.

In his early work there is manifested that directness and simplicity of imitation of Nature, and that attention to details, which characterize the best Dutch art. This has led to the assumption, for which there is no warrant, that his early love for Dutch art led him to base his style on that of the Dutch masters. Although he perceived the great

qualities of the Dutch School, his early love was all for the Italians. The qualities in his early work that recall the landscape-painters of Holland are to be accounted for by the fact that, like the masters with whom resemblances are traced, he went directly to Nature for his subjects, and imitated her in her quiet yet ample simplicity. He was at the time constantly drawing both the figure and landscape, and by this means it was that he obtained in his early pictures many of the qualities that are admired in those fathers of landscape art, Ruysdael, Hobbema, Cuyp, and Paul Potter.

But although in example after example of his early landscapes we are reminded of these masters in the truthfulness with which he reproduces the objects before him upon canvas, yet from the very first we perceive in his works qualities which the Dutch painters do not possess—qualities which are found to perfection only in the masters of the Italian School. In other words, he brings a higher imagination to bear upon his work, together with a keener sense of colour, and so transfuses his pictures with a poetic fervour and glow that at once appeal to the highest feelings of the beholder.

It is these qualities, with those above mentioned, which differentiate Linnell from so many of his contemporaries. They ally him on the one hand with Turner, and on the other with 'Old' Crome and Richard Wilson. The two latter, among Linnell's contemporaries, were the least mannered or conventional, and to them he is allied by the fidelity

with which he interprets the spirit of the landscape.

Later in life he became less severe and minute in his imitation, and worked more from the ideal of Nature. Gradually there became less of the Dutch quality in his pictures, and more of those qualities which distinguish the Italian School, in which he found more of that poetry in Nature towards the expression of which he had steadily been feeling his way. Out of this growth and development there arose a style of his own—one freer in composition, richer in colouring, and wherein the imagination was allowed fuller scope. In its way it is a style as characteristic as that of any of our greatest masters of landscape-painting.

Though the figures in his delightful foregrounds may compel attention as little as a group in a faded piece by one of the Poussins, they nevertheless tell a human story, and redeem the landscape from being desert. A direct link with human life was never wanting in a work by Linnell. In that way he kept his imagination in check. By that means he convinces us that we are still in the world of men; and the beauty and grandeur of the world he portrays is such as to inspire us with the dignity of the being who was created to inhabit and adorn it.

Before closing these introductory lines, I have to express my indebtedness to many friends for their aid in the compilation of these pages—to Mr. William Holman Hunt, to Mr. J. C. Horsley, R.A., to Mr. George Richmond, R.A., to the late Mr.

David Price, to Mr. Alfred Fripp, R.W.S., to Mr. F. G. Stephens, to Mr. Bernard Evans, R.I.; but chiefly to the sons of the painter, who placed all the necessary documents at my disposal, and assisted me in every possible way. I have also to express my indebtedness to Lord Armstrong for kindly allowing me to illustrate my book with a reproduction of the picture in his possession of 'A Storm in Autumn,' and to many others for permission to use letters, or for aid in other ways.

CHAPTER I.

Birth and Parentage—Childhood and Youth—Sundays in the Country—His Father's Failure and Enlistment—First Grief—Battle of the Nile—First Attempts at Drawing—One Day's Schooling—Copying Morland—Sir Benjamin West—First Reading—Drawing in Church.

JOHN LINNELL was the second son (the first having died in infancy) and youngest child of Mary Susannah and James Linnell, and was born in a house at one corner of Plum Tree Street (no longer in existence), which led into Hart Street, Bloomsbury, on June 16, 1792. His father, who appears to have been about thirty-two years of age when his son was born, was the only survivor of a numerous family, the greater number of whom were born and died at Chenies, the ancient seat of the Russell family, in Buckinghamshire.

Having been left an orphan about the age of seven, James Linnell appears to have been adopted by his uncle, Thomas Linnell, who was a nurseryman and florist, and carried on business in Edgware Road, at that time one of the rural outskirts of London, and the main artery of a region of market-gardens, dairy-farms, and cottage industry

generally. By this uncle the youth was apprenticed to Southerby, a carver and gilder of repute, at that time carrying on business in the Strand.

Besides his uncle Thomas, the horticulturist and florist, James Linnell had also a cousin connected with rural occupations in this vicinity. This was a Mrs. Symonds, the wife of a respectable and well-to-do farmer, who lived in Portobello Lane, between Paddington and Wormwood Scrubbs, near the end of Black Lion Lane, Bayswater, and close to the mansion of the Marquis of Buckingham, some of whose land he occupied.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Symonds appear to have been very estimable people, who gave James Linnell a most hearty welcome whenever he chose to pay a visit to their farm.

That those visits were pretty frequent, when the weather was favourable, is evident from his son's recollections. John Linnell was never tired of telling how, as a boy, he used to go with his father to the farm on Sundays, and how at night they returned home laden with the spoils of the garden. Those days he looked back upon as the brightest in his boyhood. One can easily imagine it; for the place was well stocked with fruit-trees, and there was no stint put upon the youth. He could pluck and eat to his heart's content of anything and everything that was there—apples, pears, currants, gooseberries, and what not; and, in addition, take what store he liked for the morrow.

But there was one thing which appears to have

stirred the boy's imagination even more than the gustatory treasures of the farm garden and orchard—that was the garden of the adjoining mansion, which appears to have been in a ruinous and dilapidated state. To the observant eye of young Linnell the decaying grandeur of such a place was a notable sight, and it impressed him deeply. Into this domain he used to penetrate, and spend some of the lingering hours of the sunny afternoons. Many were the things to excite his attention, and to call forth his wonder; but the object which seems to have struck him most of all was the fish-pond, which, overgrown with weeds and bordered with tall sedges, was still full of fish.

They were great days, those Sundays, with their feastings in the farm garden, their rambles about the grounds of the old hall, and finally the trudge home, beneath the starlight, to Streatham Street, where James Linnell then lived and carried on his business. John Linnell used to relate how on these occasions he dragged along the homeward way after his father, ready to drop, yet diligently counting the dingy oil-lamps that flickered at intervals along the streets. The youth's early life obtained much of its colour from these days spent at the Symonds' farm, and there is no telling how much they may have fostered in him that intense love of Nature and of the country which afterwards so characterized him.

A less pleasing incident, but one which left a deep impression upon the boy's mind, was the

despairing act committed by his father in a fit of depression when his son was only a few years old. After completing his apprenticeship, James Linnell had gone into business with a man named Durand ; and, in consequence of his bad management, coupled, doubtless, with his own inexperience, he presently found himself landed in bankruptcy. Being of a sensitive and highly-strung nature (as may be seen by the portraits of him painted by his son), this trouble so preyed upon his mind that it appears to have become temporarily unhinged ; and, in his distress, he went and enlisted as a soldier in the East India Company's service. Then it was that the fine qualities of Farmer Symonds and his wife came out ; for, on hearing what James Linnell had done, Mr. Symonds hastened to Portsmouth, bought him off at the expense of £40, and carried him back to the bosom of his agonized wife and young family.

Nor do Mr. Symonds' benefactions appear to have stopped here ; for we find that James Linnell immediately went to work with renewed vigour—this time in partnership with his own good sense alone—and soon began to thrive. One evidence of this is that a few years later he was able to pay a handsome premium for one year's tuition for his hopeful son.

A memorable incident connected with this enlistment episode is worth recording. Mr. Linnell brought home with him from Portsmouth a toy for each of his children. John's present was a dainty

little milkmaid, dressed in a bright-blue skirt, with arms akimbo. Although but the cheapest of toy damsels, the little milkmaid won the heart of the boy ; and when, by an untoward accident, she fell from the second-floor window in Rose Street, Greek Street, Soho, where they had now gone to live, the fond lover's agony was so intense that he used to say that nothing in later life affected him more deeply. This little episode served to fix the greater event in the boy's memory.

Another incident of those early years which made a deep impression upon his mind gives us a vivid glimpse of the stirring times in which Linnell's youth was passed. He recalled hearing a workman of his father's—a carpenter, who, as a pressed man, had been present at the Battle of the Nile—describe the blowing up of the French man-of-war *L'Orient*, which was close to the ship on which he served, the *Bellerophon*.

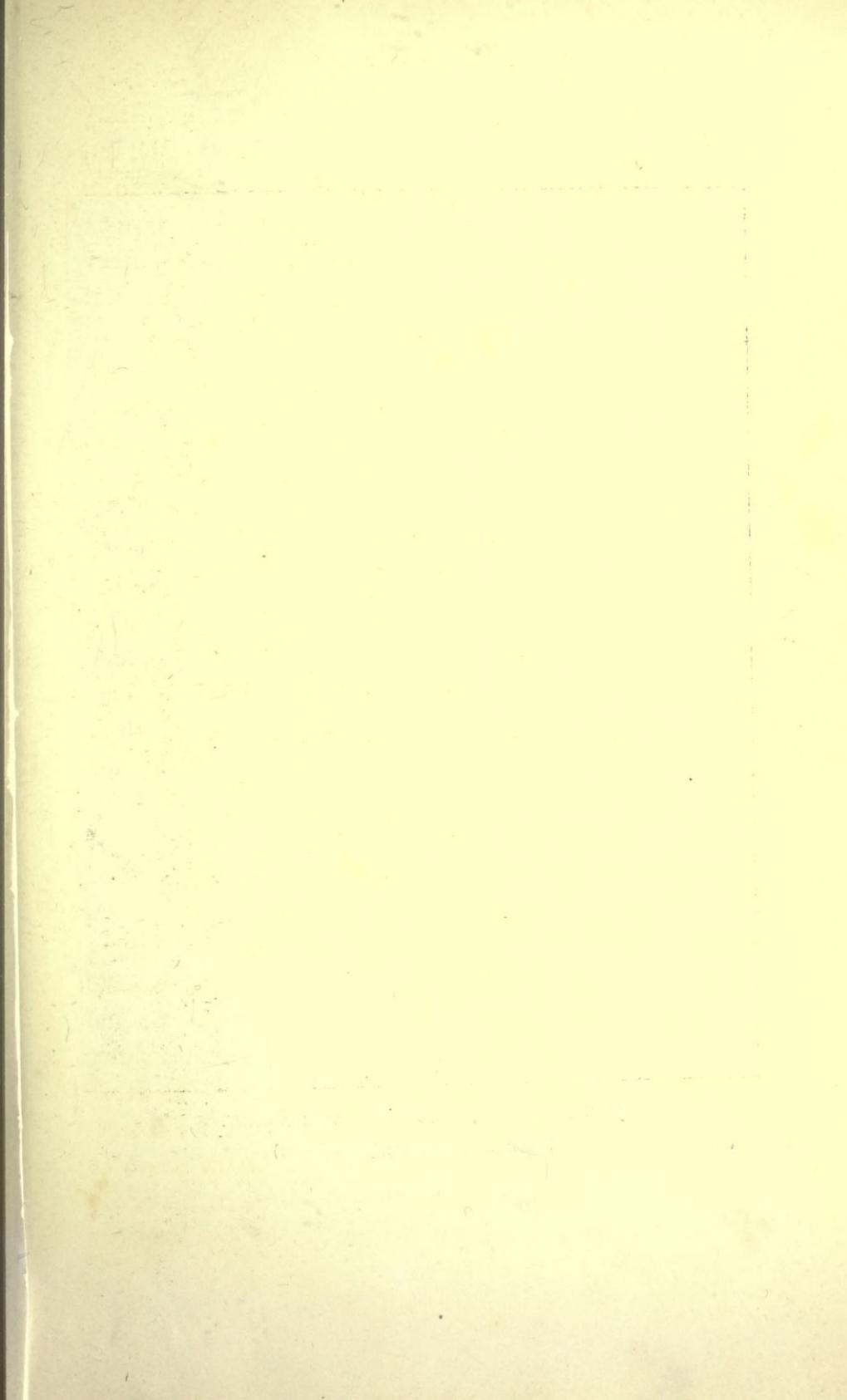
As the Battle of the Nile took place on August 1, 1798, John Linnell could only have been about six years of age when he heard this narrative.

From Rose Street, James Linnell moved to Streatham Street, off Charlotte Street, Oxford Street. At first he rented only a part of the house ; but afterwards, as his business prospered, he took the whole of it. He was an able workman, and his frames were in great demand, so that he soon had as much work as he could do. In conjunction with his business as a carver and gilder, he now did some trade as a print-seller and picture-dealer.

It may have been this circumstance that gave the first impulse to his son's genius. He was, in a sense, brought up in an atmosphere of art. Artists called to see his father about frames and other matters, and there was talk on pictures, prints, and what not, which the boy heard and absorbed. In this way, doubtless, his attention was first directed to drawing and painting.

Whether in this way or not, certain it is that John Linnell's hands were early given to the use of those tools with which to the end of his days he displayed such deftness. He began to draw when six or seven years of age, and early manifested great dexterity with the pencil. There is in existence an exercise bearing date December, 1800, executed consequently when he was only eight and a half years of age, which displays considerable promise, both as regards the handwriting, which is firm and bold, and the pencil-drawings from Morland with which he has made a decorative border.

The copy and sketches were done as a Christmas home-exercise to show the year's progress, not as a school task; for notwithstanding that he manifested this proficiency at the age of eight, John Linnell subsequently put it on record that he remembered having been but one day at school. On that solitary occasion he was taken to a dame-school in Rose Street, and tied to the handle of a chest of drawers as a sort of disciplinary introduction to the study of letters. The experiment did not prosper, however, and it was not repeated. So far as his memory





JAMES LINNELL, FATHER OF THE ARTIST.

(From a chalk drawing by the latter.)

served, he never saw the inside of a school again until he became a student at the Royal Academy. How and when he learned to read he never remembered.

The portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Linnell, as painted by their son, are still extant. Judging from them, both were undoubtedly persons of more than common intelligence and refinement ; and, with such parents, the life of the home must have been an education in itself. There is little doubt that it was there that young John Linnell obtained the best of his early instruction. Although born with all the aptitudes of an artist, it is hardly likely that he could have obtained such early proficiency as he did if he had not received some sort of training or encouragement from one or both his parents. Whilst he was still in the top-and-marble stage of development, he gave his youthful companions great satisfaction by painting figures on their kites, and had the satisfaction himself of being paid for his work.

He records in some autobiographical notes written towards the close of his career that his companions were incredulous as to the kites being of his painting, and they would not be convinced until he gave them an opportunity of looking through the window and seeing him actually at work.

Although Linnell's early efforts indicate no special precocity, when he had once taken seriously to drawing, he made such rapid progress that he was soon earning money by his pencil. It has been said, and apparently with the sanction of the artist

himself, that at the age of ten he drew passable portraits in pencil and chalk, and that he got money for them. Whether this be true or not, and there is reason to believe that it was not until he was somewhat older that he did this, he certainly began to give promise of his future extraordinary powers about that age. His father's business afforded him abundant opportunities of seeing good pictures and prints — possibly their merits or demerits were pointed out to him by his father—and he was thus encouraged to emulate their various excellences, and avoid their faults.

George Morland was one of the painters most admired at that time, and Linnell's first efforts in oil were copies from that artist. In this work he soon became so successful that one copy of pigs after the above master was sold by auction for £2 10s., whilst two other larger subjects were sold to a private customer of his father's for £20. No wonder Mr. Linnell, finding his son's work so profitable, kept him slavishly copying Morland. But the time soon came when the artistic soul of the boy revolted against the drudgery, and sighed for a change. Many years later he wrote : ' Before I knew Mr. West,* and before I was permitted to relinquish Morland, I obtained a small plaster cast, and well remember copying with intense gratification the smooth shadow and reflected light down the side of the limb. It was such a contrast to the monotony of the pencil-sketch of Morland ! It was

* Sir Benjamin West, P.R.A.

the genuine and simple enjoyment of truth, which has prevailed over tradition and fashion.'

About the same time (1803-4) the youth began to try his hand at sketching faces, and at times was sufficiently successful to obtain passable likenesses..

It must not be supposed that young John Linnell had been made a premature little man by his studies. Little he was—and, indeed, always remained so ; but he was still a boy, and a very lively one, too, always ready for a game with the boys of the neighbourhood, and not averse to a bit of mischievous fun-making. Tough and active to a degree, he threw the same vigour into his sports that he manifested in his studies.

He had by this time, too, become a great reader, and took every opportunity that presented itself to get hold of books, either by borrowing or by purchase with the little pocket-money that was at his command. He devoured everything in the shape of literature that came in his way, often reading in his bedroom when he was supposed to be in bed. Possibly his parents did not approve of so much reading as he was disposed to indulge in, and so he had to resort to prolonging the day into the night. That they did not altogether discountenance it is shown by the fact that he remembered reading the dictionary to his father. The dictionary is good reading at times, and may be made very beneficial ; but there is a limit to its fruitfulness regarded as literature, and so, doubtless, young Linnell found it.

Amongst the works he read at this time, and of which he always retained a vivid and pleasing recollection, was a history of Rome, in four large volumes, with full and particular accounts of the wars, battles, etc. It also contained a large number of plates, which greatly added to Linnell's delight in the book. Many of them, doubtless, served as drawing copies, for he now practised his hand on almost everything. Even in church, when he should have been paying attention to the prayers and the sermon, he either spent the time drawing with a pin upon the front of the pew or with his finger upon his knees. When he could not do either of these, he would be drawing figures in imagination in the air. This was a habit that he practised a great deal, drawing in this way in fancy as he walked along the streets, and thus, as he believed, greatly strengthening his memory of forms. So retentive became his memory in this respect that he was enabled to carry the shapes and colours of objects in his mind a long time for future use. The faculty subsequently became a sort of second nature, enabling him to reproduce landscapes and cloud-forms with the greatest accuracy without taking a single note in the shape of a sketch on paper.

CHAPTER II.

Early Masters—Copying at Christie's—William Varley—Introduction to John Varley—Mulready—Sir Benjamin West—Becomes a Pupil of Varley—William H. Hunt—Twickenham—Study of Nature—Cornelius Varley—Astrology—A Famous Prediction—Painting *v.* Boxing—Turner and Girtin.

HITHERTO the youth's artistic studies had consisted almost entirely of copying, and that chiefly from Morland; although he had about his twelfth year (1804) begun to draw from the cast, as we have seen. He was now to launch out into a broader path, and to get fairly on the way to an artistic career. About this time (most probably in 1804) he made the acquaintance of three or four men who had in their several ways a special influence upon his future. Happening one day to be lingering with his sketch-book in Christie's sale-room, in King Street, St. James's, he was attracted by a picture of Girtin's, and was furtively making a note of it, when he was seen by William Fleetwood Varley, the youngest brother of John Varley, the famous water-colour painter, and himself a fair artist in that medium.

Struck by the boy's intelligent look and by his diligence, William Varley got into conversation with

him, and ended by asking him to go and see his brother, who was the best known teacher of the time.

John Varley was then living at No. 2, Harris Place, a sort of blind alley running out of Oxford Street, near the Pantheon. There Linnell went to see him. Varley, who was born in 1777, was now in the heyday of his powers, having first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1798, and in 1799 brought back from Wales those drawings which made an epoch in art, and won for him the proud title of Father of the English School of Water-Colour Painters. He was greatly to the front in those days, and about the time when young Linnell called upon him he was very busy with others—among them being James Holmes—in establishing the Society of Painters in Water-Colours (1804), to the exhibitions of which he sent a large number of pictures. While his most carefully executed works show him to have been a master of some of the great truths in Nature, a large number of his pictures are inferior and commonplace in quality, as may be seen from the specimens at South Kensington.

Linnell was kindly received by Varley, who carefully examined his work, and questioned him as to what instruction he had received. Greatly impressed with his abilities, he gave him all the encouragement he could, and allowed him to visit him as often as he liked.

On his first visit to Varley he met William Henry Hunt, afterwards the famous painter of rustic and

humorous subjects and of flowers and fruit, and the two became great friends, and went out sketching together. Hunt had just become a pupil of Varley's, as Linnell was to be a little later, and was so much in advance of his friend, that the latter looked up to him, wondering if he should ever be able to accomplish as much as he had then attained to.

Shortly after Linnell's introduction to him, Varley removed from Harris Place to 5, Broad Street, Golden Square, where the youth met William Mulready for the first time. Mulready was a young Irishman, born in Ennis in 1786, and consequently Linnell's senior by six years. He was then living with Varley, having married his eldest sister. In his autobiography, written many years later, Linnell several times makes mention of this first meeting with Mulready; and it was, indeed, to him a memorable event. For instance, he writes : 'Mulready had already married Varley's sister before I knew Varley, for when I first saw Mulready at Varley's in Broad Street, his wife and first child were in the room.' Again he writes : 'Mr. Mulready was living in Varley's second floor, and painting upon his picture of "St. Peter's Well," when I first saw him. This was on a visit to Varley before I was placed under him by my father.'

A frank, genial, large-hearted, and handsome young fellow, of good proportions, Mulready no sooner made the acquaintance of the quick and eager young student than he perceived the strength and originality of his talents, and at once took him

into his confidence and under his protection. Both seem to have been attracted to each other at the same time, most probably by a mutual respect for each other's powers. Mulready asked the youthful artist to give him his opinion on the picture he was working upon, and Linnell on his part soon became so greatly impressed with the young Irishman's powers that he wished very much to become his pupil. This, however, was a little later. Mulready was then a Royal Academy scholar, and was looked up to as one of the most promising young artists of the day.

Meanwhile, Linnell had become acquainted with another painter, who also gave him all the aid and encouragement he could. This was Sir Benjamin West, President of the Royal Academy, to whom he was introduced by Andrew Robertson, the Scotch miniature-painter. West, who then resided in Newman Street, Oxford Street, that thoroughfare and the district round about forming the artist quarter of those days, received the young aspirant with kindness, and greatly praised some chalk sketches on blue paper which he had taken to show him. A few of these drawings are still in existence, and are undoubtedly among the first he made from Nature. They display, for one so young, great facility in drawing with the point, together with astonishing firmness of line and good perspective.

Without formally taking him as a pupil, West allowed him to visit his studio, and gave him valuable advice and instruction. In his autobiography, Linnell says: 'To Mr. West I went once

or twice a week to show him my attempts at drawing from the cast. I had only been permitted by my father to take this new path and forsake the copying of Morland by the earnest representations of John Varley backing my own more earnest entreaties. . . . My visits to him (West) were in the morning just before he began to paint.'

He goes on to say that West often worked upon his drawings with chalk, and gave him clear and simple instruction. 'I often stayed and saw him paint on his large pictures. . . . Mr. West expressed himself much pleased with some black and white chalk studies of mine made in company with W. Hunt. The objects were only some workmen with barrows, etc., in the excavations then making for the houses of Russell Square.'

Linnell always gratefully remembered these acts of kindness of the veteran artist, and seems to have derived considerable benefit from his advice and instruction, although he was never greatly struck with his laboured and somewhat lifeless compositions. The friendship between the two lasted for several years, during which Linnell was ever welcome at the President's studio. After leaving Newman Street, West went to live in a house on the Terrace at Hammersmith. There, too, Linnell visited him, and one of his recollections was of having seen hanging on his wall a small painting by himself of the river near that point with boats. Afterwards this picture came into his own possession, as well as the house in which he first saw it.

Linnell's pupilship under Varley appears to have begun at the end of 1805 or the beginning of 1806. As we have seen, it had been his desire to become the pupil of Mulready; but at the latter's suggestion he put himself under Varley, although he always received valuable help from Mulready. On this subject he writes: 'My first desire and earnest wish was to be under Mr. Mulready, whose work and personal qualities made a great impression upon me. He was so far above me in everything, and at the same time so communicative, that I might be said to be under his influence more than Varley's.' He goes on to say that Mulready was at the time of his asking to become his pupil living at No. 9, Upper Cleveland Street, Fitzroy Square, having then removed from Varley's house in Broad Street, where Linnell saw him at work on his 'St. Peter's Well.' This picture was exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1806, and in the catalogue his address is given as above. Hence we get an approximation to the date of Linnell's going under Varley.

The prospects that Varley held out to Mr. James Linnell of his son's advancement under his guidance must have been very tempting; for though his price for board, lodging, and tuition for a year was only £100, it was a large sum for a struggling tradesman, who had, moreover, not only to pay that amount, but to lose, in addition, what the boy had been earning by his copies of Morland and others. Nor were Varley's representations sufficient without the further enforcement of the youth's own earnest wish

to be allowed to benefit by this chance of tuition, and his confidence that he would thereby be enabled to earn still more than he had done before.

For a year, therefore, John Linnell became Varley's inmate and pupil. This was a great change for the young artist, and he profited greatly by it. For one thing, it freed him from the drudgery of slavish copying, against which his artistic nature began to revolt more and more. Varley's motto was, 'Go to Nature for everything,' and henceforth Linnell adopted it as his own. In order the better to enable his pupils to carry out his advice, Varley in the summer took a house at Twickenham near to the river, and sent them out into the highways and byways to make such transcripts as they could.

But although the pupil of Varley, for whom he had ever a great admiration, Linnell himself acknowledged that he received more valuable instruction from Mulready than from anyone else. 'Indeed'—so he wrote when nearly seventy years of age—'I feel bound to say I am more indebted to him than to anyone I ever knew.'

Linnell used to say that no one could know Mulready as intimately as he did without having all his faculties greatly stimulated. His opinion was that Mulready's influence upon him was such that his powers were taxed beyond his strength. He was, he thought, inferior to Mulready; and physically this was no doubt true, the latter being a strong, broad-set, active man, standing five feet ten, while Linnell's stature, even in his prime, did not exceed

five feet five inches. In his old age, when he had come to stoop somewhat, his stature was even less than that. Yet, in spite of this inferiority of physique, Linnell lived to be the older of the two.

During the summer at Twickenham, Linnell spent a great deal of his time with Hunt—on the river and in the neighbouring lanes and fields—sketching and painting, using oils, and working on millboard. There are several sketches in the possession of the Linnell family which he and Hunt painted at this time, one of them showing Hunt's work on one side of the millboard, and Linnell's on the other. They exhibit a good deal of firmness of touch and boldness of execution, with considerable richness of colour and tone, and commendable fidelity to Nature, Linnell's on the whole appearing to exhibit the most power.

The secret of Varley's success as a teacher appears to have lain in the fact that he sent his pupils to Nature, and confined his tuition to giving a general superintendence to their work, but infusing into them his own enthusiasm. Probably, if the truth were known, the latter would be found to be the chief element of his success, for he was undoubtedly a man of great personal qualities.

He was a hearty, good-natured soul, full of life and vitality, and generous and unsuspicuous to a fault. He had the defects of his qualities, and was accordingly easily imposed upon by the crafty. His sagacity appears to have been at fault in regard to

his marriage. His wife was Esther Gisborne, a sister of John Gisborne, the friend of Shelley.* She had been previously married; but Varley seems to have been unaware of the fact that she had a son, and he showed a disposition to rebel when he learned that he had a third person to provide for. He was, however, finally softened and brought to terms by his mother.

As already intimated, Linnell's admiration for John Varley was very great. He had a high appreciation of the sterling qualities which went to the forming of his character. He used to say that if John Varley was not a religious man, he was, at least, not a hypocrite. His mother, who lived with him, and whom, of course, Linnell knew, was a very religious woman, and indirectly, as the sequel will show, had an influence on the young artist. But John Varley turned a deaf ear to her admonitions, and, indeed, seems to have scouted her religious notions. His mind ran in other directions, and Linnell's judgment—for even then he had a clear insight into character—was that he might not have been a better man, if so good, if he had made religious professions, which is no doubt true.

The only one of the Varley brothers who was at all religiously inclined was Cornelius, the next in age to John. He took after his mother, and, like John and William, was a water-colour painter. Several of his works may be seen at South Kens-

* Copley V. Fielding, the landscape-painter, married Susannah, another of the sisters.

ington, along with many of John's, and one or two of William's.

While Linnell was studying under John Varley, Cornelius Varley was often at his house, and the young artist conceived considerable respect for him. He presented a striking contrast to his broad, bluff King Hal of a brother, being small, dapper, and as sharp as a needle. He had a bright, pleasing face, with sparkling eyes and prominent features. In his painter's language, Linnell used to say he was 'all high lights,' the prominences of his forehead forming two, his nose and cheeks making three others, and his chin a sixth. He was a man of considerable originality, of a scientific turn, full of schemes and inventions (being among other things the inventor of the 'Graphic Telescope'), and such a rapid and incessant talker that it was difficult for anyone to get in a word while he was present. He was one of the first members of the Water-Colour Society, and took credit to himself as having been the first to propose its formation. Cromwell Varley, the electrician, was his son.

In regard to schemes and notions, John Varley was much like his brother Cornelius, except that he was not by any means so scientific. He invariably had some invention on foot, and, among other things, used to describe to his friends a machine upon which he was engaged, that, when perfected, would enable men to fly over the ground at lightning speed. But John Varley's bent was mainly to things of an occult nature. He was a believer in judicial astrology, and

had a very creditable knowledge of the ‘science,’ if one may take the word of those who knew him. He was one of the first calculators of human probabilities of his day, and was credited with a number of very happy prognostications. Once he foretold that on a certain day he himself would be in danger from water, because under the constellation Aquarius. He resolved, therefore, not to venture out of the house that day ; but, going downstairs, he fell over a bucket of water and broke his shins. Linnell used to say that, in consequence of this accident, Varley used ever afterwards to wear tin leggings.*

He was much happier in another of his prognostications. Amongst the number of his friends was Mr. (afterwards Sir) Augustus Wall Callcott, R.A. ; and once when they and several others, including Mulready, met at Callcott’s house, Varley proposed to take the latter’s horoscope. Callcott gave him the necessary particulars, and a few days subsequently Varley gave Mulready a sealed envelope, and asked him to take charge of it and produce it on Callcott’s forty-eighth birthday, as something eventful would then happen. Mulready had forgotten about the horoscope incident, but took charge of the document. Sixteen years afterwards, on Callcott’s forty-eighth birthday, whilst seated at the latter’s wedding-breakfast—for he happened to be married on that day—Mulready was asked to produce the sealed envelope, and read what it contained. He did so,

* Gilchrist tells this story in his Life of Blake, but he causes Varley to make the prediction of another person.

and to the intense amusement and astonishment of everybody present, the document predicted that Mr. Callcott would be married on his forty-eighth birthday, and that immediately after his marriage he would go abroad. The second item in the prediction was no less true than the first, for he and his wife (the widow of Captain Graham, R.N.) went abroad to spend their honeymoon, and stayed on the Continent a couple of years.

This striking prediction greatly redounded to Varley's fame as a reader of the stars. He is said also to have foretold the death of William Collins, R.A., to the very day.

To some persons Varley's predictions appeared to bear the impress of Satanic origin, so incredible were they. Possibly James Ward, the landscape and animal painter, was not exactly of that opinion ; but he thought there was something unholy about his horoscopes, and destroyed those he had had done of his children, because they turned out so true—surely a queer reason for such an act.

Varley seems to have been equally clever at reading people's destiny from their hands, palmistry also having been one of the 'sciences' he cultivated. Nor was he above taking a fee in either branch. A strange character truly ! Had he been living to-day, one knows not where he would have been wanted the most—in West-End drawing-rooms to read palms, or in the police-courts for reading the stars.

This genial cultivator of the occult sciences was

likewise an ardent believer in physiognomy, and had some peculiar theories in regard to the influence of the planets on the human face, which he set forth in a work entitled ‘Zodiacal Physiognomy.’

He was also the author of two works on art, ‘Observations on Colouring and Sketching from Nature,’ and ‘A Practical Treatise on Perspective.’

It must have been a lively society into which John Linnell was thus suddenly thrown, and in the midst of which he spent much of the next few years of his life, for he remained a member of the Varley circle long after he had finished his studies under its head. A man is very much what his early surroundings make him, for in youth he is all receptivity and assimilation, while later it becomes more and more difficult to accept ideas at variance with those which have been first received and adopted. That Linnell must have been greatly influenced by the Varley circle and surroundings there can be no doubt. Happily, he was of a strong moral constitution, and of a reflective disposition, that inclined him even then to accept and reject in accordance with what appeared to him just and wholesome.

The chief evil that he fell into was in allowing himself to be led to tax his powers in emulation of the feats of strength and endurance performed by men who were older and much more physically developed than himself. The effects of these indiscretions he did not feel so much then as somewhat later in life. With Mulready, with his splendid physique, and an adept in most manly exercises, he

was tempted to take long walks, to run and leap, and otherwise put forth his powers far beyond what was judicious for a youth of his age, and of his delicate and sensitive organization. A favourite resort of theirs was the river at Milbank, then of quiet and rural aspect.

Mulready doubtless thought he was toughening his young companion, or he, generous and high-minded as he was, would not have put him to the strain he often did. With the same end in view he taught Linnell boxing. This was a special delight of Mulready's, and wherever he was, there boxing became the order of the day. John Varley's house, Linnell used to say, was a regular school of boxing ; everyone practised it, and Varley himself and Mulready used to have great bouts with the gloves. But the former, big, broad-shouldered, 'elephantine,' though he was, was no match for his sturdy brother-in-law, who knocked him about so much that after a set-to he was glad to go and lie down in the corner of the room and rest.

In fact, very few men could stand up long before the tough young Hibernian, who was an adept in this as in most other things requiring great nerve and strong physique.

Linnell tells an anecdote showing his nerve which, as it does not appear to have been previously put upon record, is worthy of mention here. Being desirous of making sketches of a lion, he obtained permission to visit the collection of wild beasts then to be seen at Exeter 'Change, which formed the

nucleus of what afterwards became the present zoological collection at Regent's Park. But going one morning when the keeper was absent, he made his way into the inclosure where the lion's cage was, to find the king of beasts loose and himself confronted by his tawny majesty. The story goes that for three-quarters of an hour, until, in short, the keeper returned, Mulready kept the lion at bay by the power of his eye.

But to return to his feats pugilistic. On one occasion there was a disturbance at the Academy in consequence of Sam Strowger, the famous R.A. porter and model, having been insolent to the students. Mulready took up the cudgels for the latter, challenged 'Little Sam,' as he was called, to fight, and he being also a noted boxer, and nothing loath, they repaired to the street, followed by all the students, to have the matter out. But when the obstreperous porter saw the young artist with his coat off and his shirtsleeves rolled up, he called down his towering spirits, cried off, and humbly apologized for his ill-manners. But this was later, when Linnell also was an Academy student.

Our artist also became an adept in the use of the gloves, and it was one of his delights at night, after the Academy lessons were over, to go with the others and practise the manly art. Tradition has it that he once drew blood from George Dawe (son of Philip Dawe; Hogarth and Morland's pupil), afterwards an Academician, who was another of the Varley circle. Certain it is that the gory glove long

hung in Linnell's studio, at once a trophy of his prowess and a memento of the brisk and enjoyable days spent with the Varley set.

Thus it was that John Linnell studied art under Varley, and was taught to be manly and to paint by Mulready. But not these two only were his masters; he was of such an eager and receptive nature that he learned from all about him. While he and Hunt were roaming about the country around Twickenham, rowing up and down the river, and sketching everything that came in their way, he was for ever comparing notes with his companion, and absorbing from him all that was useful and to his profit.

Besides Callcott, Mulready, Dawe, Hunt, etc., Linnell used to meet at Varley's many of the members of the newly-constituted Water-Colour Society (which at that time held its exhibitions in Brook Street, Grosvenor Square), including Cristall, William Havel, James Holmes, Copley V. Fielding, and others.

Of some of these men he does not appear to have had a very high opinion. Cristall he did not consider a colourist at all. He drew gods and goddesses after the then approved conventional Greek model, and as the conventionalism that never attempts realization from Nature was ever Linnell's abhorrence, it is not to be wondered at if he did not think much of his productions. Of Havel he had a higher opinion ; he looked upon him as a clever water-colour painter, and admired his works.

Callcott was only an occasional visitor. He fol-

lowed Turner in doing both landscape and marine painting, and, strange as it may now seem, he was considered at that time to stand next to Turner, whom it was then the fashion to call 'the great Turner.' Since the death of Girtin the latter was accounted the greatest genius in water-colour painting. 'He was regarded,' Linnell wrote, 'as the inheritor of all that Girtin had discovered, and to which he was adding largely.' The great Turner himself Linnell did not meet until much later.

CHAPTER III.

A Royal Academy Student—Fuseli—Games at the Academy—Anecdotes of Fuseli—Linnell's Fellow-students—Dr. Munro—Begins to earn Money—David Wilkie—William Collins—Appreciation of Roman and Florentine Art—Mulready and Linnell—First Academy Picture—Gains a Prize of Fifty Guineas at the British Institution and a Medal at the Academy.

THE year that Linnell spent under John Varley's roof was a very important one. It put him in the right direction, and once having got his true bearings, he advanced with rapid strides. He always considered that Varley and Mulready did him the greatest possible service by aiding him to emancipate himself from the slavish imitation of, and copying from, Morland, at which his father was keeping him because it paid. By them he was introduced to the study of Nature, and by them taught that faithful copying of what he saw which ever afterwards characterized his work. Then was laid the foundation of that resort to Nature for everything from which he never departed—of that love of Nature that appeared only to intensify with his years, and with which his great masterpieces seem to be permeated.

In November, 1805, being then in his fourteenth

year, young Linnell became a Royal Academy student, and so took another onward step in his career. There he was brought in contact with a still larger circle of men, who were travelling the same road with himself. Amongst others, he made the acquaintance of B. R. Haydon (who had the year before been admitted a student of the Royal Academy) and David Wilkie ; and he records that the three of them, along with Mulready, used to dine together at a chop-house for thirteen-pence a head. But while the others were satisfied with what they got for that amount, Haydon would afterwards go to a fruit-shop and expend a shilling on the best fruit he could procure. It was always poor Haydon's notion that an artist should live like a gentleman, no matter what was his income.

Fuseli was then Keeper of the Royal Academy (having been elected to that position in 1804), and, odd as he was talented, he appears to have been an endless source of amusement to the students under his charge. He called Linnell his 'little giant,' notwithstanding that he was quite as big as the dapper little keeper himself. But what Fuseli lacked in stature he made up for in dignity and self-importance. He must, indeed, have looked comical enough in his powdered wig and pigtail, his top-boots, and with that air of cold austerity which he always assumed when in presence of the students. Perhaps it was necessary, for they were a rough and riotous lot when he was put in charge over them.

' You are a set of blackguards ! ' he exclaimed one

day, on entering, and finding them making the greatest uproar: ‘you are a lot of wild beasts!’ adding, with a touch of that dry and somewhat sardonic humour for which he was noted, ‘and I am your keeper.’

He was obliged to hold them in check by a firm, unflinching rule. The pranks they got up to were endless. One of them was to make pellets of the bread that was given to them for lunch, and to bombard each other with them. Another was to melt the candles that were supplied to them to work with, scatter the grease upon the floor, and so make slides for their amusement. The little man eventually put an end to these pranks. They could not be deprived of their candles, for without them they could not work; but he stopped their bread, and so there was no more pellet-throwing.

But, notwithstanding his severity and his many oddities, the keeper appears to have been, on the whole, very well liked. For one thing, he could appreciate a joke, and such a trait naturally covers a multitude of faults. He was a terrible man to swear, and, being a linguist, it was his boast that he could swear in nine different languages. One cannot help confessing a desire to have heard such a man display his powers—for once in a way, that is. His weakness in this respect may not have been very edifying to the students; but much, even in that line, may be forgiven to a man if it act as an anodyne to his nerves; and that he so regarded it would appear from the advice he once gave to his wife

when she was worrying over some domestic trouble.

'Why don't you swear, my dear?' he asked.

'Why don't you swear? It would ease your mind.'

On one occasion he surprised a youth mimicking him before the class. Those who looked on and saw the keeper observing the performance naturally thought there would be an explosion presently, and waited with bated breath. But after looking on quietly for some time, Fuseli quietly remarked, 'It is very good; it is better than I could have done it myself,' and went away.

Another anecdote that Linnell used to relate with much relish was how on one occasion Fuseli told the students they might go to his house and see his just-finished picture of 'The Witch of Endor,' if they would behave themselves, and how he received them with his wife's work-basket on his head in place of a hat.

He used to correct the students' drawings with his thumb-nail, which he appears to have kept long and sharp for the purpose. The result was that he generally cut through the paper, so that the drawing was spoiled and had to be begun over again. As regards his advice to Linnell, he always concluded it with the words :

'But you know best.'

The worthy keeper appears to have had a high opinion of Linnell's abilities as a draughtsman, and once gave him a drawing of his own to enlarge, for which he paid him seven shillings. The young artist was greatly impressed by the eccentric old

gentleman, and his memory was charged with numberless examples of his odd sayings and doings.*

One of his anecdotes related to Fuseli's quaint way of introducing two sculptors :

' This is Mr. Nollekens and this is Mr. Marchant, two of the cleverest sculptors of the day ; but in everything else they are two old daddies.'

Of Shee (afterwards Sir Martin Shee, President of the Royal Academy) he had a very poor opinion, and used to say :

' There's Misther Martin Shee, one of the vorst bainters God iver made.'

Linnell had an inimitable way of repeating these anecdotes, mimicking Fuseli's deliberate manner of speaking and his foreign intonation. He had a keen sense of fun and wit, and was ever full of anecdote and reminiscence of these early days.

Besides those already mentioned, Linnell had as fellow-students at the Academy William Collins, William H. Hunt, Hilton (afterwards keeper), and Jackson (the portrait-painter). Most of them were drawing from the antique at the same time, and our artist had pleasant recollections of the sport they enjoyed together after the school was over, then being the time when the boxing-bouts chiefly took place.

Very often William Hunt and he went to draw for a couple of hours at an academy in Adelphi Terrace, conducted by Dr. John Munro, 'one of a family

* As regards Fuseli's art, Linnell thought that, though exaggerated and mannered, yet it was instinct with poetry and thought. It possessed some of Blake's qualities, but was less pure and spiritual.

of mad doctors,' and the physician in insanity of poor George III. This school of art was conducted on the novel principle of the master paying the pupils, instead of *vice-versâ*. The usual price paid to students was half-a-crown for an evening's work ; but Hunt and Linnell were paid at the rate of eighteenpence an hour, thus earning three shillings each evening they went.

The doctor had a large collection of drawings by Girtin and Turner, both of whom had been his pupils, and whom he had been in the habit of taking out to one or other of his country houses or elsewhere to sketch for him from Nature. From these drawings, as also from studies by Gainsborough and Constable (in charcoal), of which he had a large collection, Linnell and Hunt were set to make copies. The former was of opinion that the doctor used to sell their copies for originals ; but Mr. F. G. Stephens, who has made careful inquiry into the matter, is convinced that this is a mistake, and that the doctor was actuated solely by a love of art. 'Mad, surely,' the world will doubtless say.

John Varley, among others, besides Turner and Girtin, had been a pupil of Munro's, and, like them, had benefited by his stipendiary method of tuition.

It does not appear that Linnell ever paid a visit to any of his country-houses, of which he had several not far from London ; but Hunt seems to have done so, and there is a tradition that he, being of an exceedingly delicate constitution and unable to indulge in much walking exercise, used to be

dragged about by a donkey in a sort of go-cart, and in this way, protected by a large umbrella from sun or rain, he would make sketches of whatever interested him. These excursions took place in the neighbourhood of Watford and Bushy, where one of the 'mad doctor's' country-houses was situated.

Another incident of his student days which Linnell used to tell with much amusement was very characteristic. One evening, after their studies at Somerset House (at that time the home of the Royal Academy) were over, Mulready, Hunt, and he wandered along the Strand to look at the illuminations in celebration of a victory over the enemy, and presently found themselves wedged in the crowd and unable to extricate themselves. They did not relish the idea of being kept there half the night, and so conceived the happy notion of making Hunt sham death, while the other two hoisted his stiffened body upon their shoulders, and begged the crowd to make way for pity's sake, which they instantly did, with many expressions of commiseration for the poor youth.

Although Wilkie was still an Academy student, he had already commenced to do original work; but he had—like many another in those days—to be content with very moderate prices. His picture of 'The Village Politicians' was commissioned by Lord Mansfield. Wilkie asked fifteen guineas for it. Mansfield thought the price too high, and suggested that if he took counsel with his friends they might advise him to accept less. Fuseli, who was

consulted, declared that it was worth two hundred pounds, and someone actually offered that sum for it. Upon hearing this, Lord Mansfield claimed the picture, and gave the painter thirty pounds for it.

William Collins (the father of Wilkie Collins, the novel-writer) became a student of the Academy some time after Linnell, although several years his senior. The friendship between the two there commenced lasted through life, despite differences of opinion on art and other matters which often brought them into sharp conflict.

Collins's father was a picture-dealer, and had a shop in Bolsover Street, Oxford Street. He and the elder Linnell had frequent dealings together. Both William Collins and young Linnell were at first of the Morland school ; but they soon developed very different views in respect to art. Collins pinned his faith to the Dutch and Flemish schools, and had no opinion of the Italians. He was so blind to the merits of the latter that he would not even allow that Michael Angelo and Raphael were artists at all.

'They were,' he said, 'merely fresco-painters.'

Linnell, on the contrary, who had seen some excellent copies of Michael Angelo's works in the Sistine Chapel, particularly of his 'Last Judgment,' and of Raphael's 'Loggia' and cartoons, and had besides made frequent visits to Hampton Court to study the latter, was already an enthusiastic admirer of these masters. He was in consequence treated with contempt as a person of no judgment by Collins, who equally despised both the Roman and

the Florentine schools. Later, however, when David Wilkie went to Rome, he wrote a letter to Collins describing the 'Last Judgment,' which he conceived to be in colour as fine as anything he had seen in the Flemish or Venetian schools. This praise of Wilkie's caused Collins to change his views in regard to the Roman school, and henceforth he proclaimed his belief in them with all the ardour of one who had made a new discovery, forgetting that he had previously treated with contempt those who held similar views. This was one of Collins's amiable weaknesses.

As regards this attitude of Linnell's towards the Roman and Florentine schools, it should be said that he very early began to perceive and appreciate their great qualities; and he never deviated from the opinion then formed, writing some fifty years later: 'Only think of Michael Angelo, the architect of St. Peter's, the sculptor of very fine statues, and the inimitable painter of frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, where the finest design may be said, without fear of contradiction, to be enhanced by fine colour.'

Linnell did not consider that he gained much from the Varley school of art, and he always considered that it was a good thing for him that Varley's influence was enlarged and corrected by his studies at the Academy. Through the old masters of the Italian school, he began to have perceptions of Nature which he had not previously experienced. Later he put it on record that when he went to

Wales, the beauty of Nature reminded him more of the backgrounds in Raphael's 'Loggia' than of anything else he had seen in art. But of this I shall have more to say in a subsequent chapter.

During these Academy days, Mulready and Linnell became inseparable. They were like another Jonathan and David; indeed, so marked was their friendship that they were caricatured together, the elder as looking over the junior's shoulder whilst painting. Mulready had as yet produced no strikingly original work. He was compelled by poverty to spend his time and waste his genius in painting panoramas. He began to exhibit in the Academy in 1805; but it was not until 1808 that he attracted much mention, the picture which then brought him into notice being 'The Rattle.' 'The Music Lesson' followed in 1809. In 1805 'The Idle Boys' won him the Associateship, while next year he was elected a full Academician.

Mulready always proved himself a genuine friend to Linnell, and was ever regarded by those who knew him as the soul of honour. He had a kindly heart, too, and not a few struggling artists were befriended by him. One of his protégés was a common friend of his and Linnell's, and one of the most singular geniuses of their wide circle of artist acquaintances. This was William, or 'Billy,' Dixon, as he was generally called, a man of uncommon ability, and of great knowledge in matters of art, yet so singularly deficient as regards strength of purpose that he never finished anything. He had

no sooner brought a picture to the point of completion than he either began to take it to pieces, or else set it aside altogether. To a heart of the kindest he joined an awkwardness, a bashfulness, and an untidiness that possibly accounted for his utter failure. The garret in which he lived his bachelor life, and in which he was finally found dead, was the very perfection of disorder. He was a great friend of Mulready's, who took no end of trouble with him, and employed him on his panoramas ; but there was always something wanting in poor Dixon. When he was drawing, as often as not he drew his figures in such a way that either the head or the feet could not find room on the paper or canvas.

During all this time, Linnell was diligently at work drawing from the antique, from the life, and from Nature, and making himself equally proficient in each department. He neglected nothing that would be likely to help him forward on the career he had chosen. He had promised his father that, if he would let him study under Varley, he would soon earn more for him than he could do by merely making copies of Morland, and his efforts to redeem his pledge were of the most strenuous and unremitting description.

This perseverance soon bore good fruit. In 1807 he sent two small landscapes to the Academy exhibition, and both were hung. They were in oil, the titles being 'A Scene from Nature' and 'A View near Reading.' His companion Hunt ex-



REMOVING TIMBER—AUTUMN.

(From an oil-painting by J. Linnell, 1808.)

hibited three similar studies the same year, one of his also being a study near Reading, showing that the two were still working much together. As may be said of nearly all Linnell's early work, so of these: they were faithful studies of Nature, broad in treatment and poetic in feeling, even then giving promise of his subsequent attainment.

The same year he obtained the silver medal of the Royal Academy (in competition with R. D. Thilke and H. Corbould) for a drawing from the life, being then fifteen years of age. In the spring of the following year (1808) he was very successful at the then existing British Institution with a picture of 'Fishermen in a Boat on the River,' which sold the first day of the exhibition.

The British Institution was established for the purpose of encouraging native art, and each year it gave prizes for the best work in the different departments of art. In January, 1809, Linnell gained the Institution's fifty-guinea prize for the best landscape, beating John James Challon, a matured artist, who was his only competitor. This picture was 'The Woodcutters,' in which Kensington Gardens were used as a background. Mulready's father (a leather-breeches-maker from Ennis) posed for the principal figure. The picture was exhibited in the Institution the same year. The artist asked eighty guineas for it, and would have sold it but for some misunderstanding. It is still in the possession of the Linnell family, and is perhaps one of the best in the artist's early style.

This landscape was exhibited at the Royal Academy Exhibition of Old Masters in 1883, and was then catalogued as ‘*Removing Timber in Autumn.*’ It is on canvas, and measures 26 inches by $34\frac{1}{2}$ inches. It is rather dark in tone, but appears to be as fine in colour as when painted over eighty years ago. Its qualities are those of the Dutch school, showing great fidelity to Nature, and a scrupulous minuteness in painting.

Wilkie’s diary (January 8, 1809) refers to the result of this competition as follows: ‘I heard to-day that at the Institution the prizes were awarded as follows: Dow for historical painting; Sharpe (Michael) for a domestic subject; and Master Linnell for a landscape.’ The ‘Master’ is significant.

In the following year (1810) Linnell was successful in two academic competitions. The question was raised among the students as to whether the sculptors could draw as well as the painters, or the painters model as well as the sculptors. Our artist was chosen to compete with Thomas Wyon, the medallist, in modelling in bas-relief a back-view from life. The subject was Sam Strowger, the Academy model already referred to; and Linnell came off in triumph, beating the sculptor on his own ground, thus showing—what was all through life one of his distinguishing characteristics—his wonderful eye for form, and his accuracy in delineating it. For this model—which is still in the

possession of the Linnell family—he was awarded the Academy medal.

In the drawing competition also between the painters and the sculptors Linnell was equally successful, taking the first place.

CHAPTER IV.

Leaves his Father's House—Begins to keep a Diary—David Wilkie—Love of the Theatre—Journey to Dover—‘St. John Preaching’—Mulready and Linnell—Kensington Gravel Pits—‘The Quoit-Players’—His Versatility—Industry.

THE young artist was now fairly launched upon his career. Soon after winning the prize of fifty guineas at the British Institution, he left his father's house, and went to live in lodgings in the Hampstead Road. We have no means of knowing exactly why he took this step. Possibly there may have been some disagreement. There is reason to believe that John thought his father stood in the way of his artistic success by regarding too much the present monetary value of his labour, and being averse to his giving too much time to mere study.

Possibly, however, there may have been other reasons for his thus dis severing himself from parental control. It is not unlikely that the house in Streatham Street did not permit of his having a room to himself as a studio, which had now become a necessity to him. But being always of a very independent and self-reliant disposition, it may be

that he thought he should do best for himself if thrown entirely upon his own resources. He had for some time previously bought his time, as it were, from his father. In other words, there seems to have been an agreement between them that, after he had worked so many hours a day for his father, he should be at liberty to dispose of the remainder as he liked, or for his own personal advantage. Some such working arrangement as this appears to have existed till he was of age.

We have seen that the young artist did not quite like being kept so slavishly copying the pictures of Morland and others. He soon began to perceive that whilst it paid his father to keep him so employed, it was calculated to injure his future prospects ; and so he struck for more freedom—for the liberty, indeed, to work out his genius in his own way, undertaking, however, to buy his time from his father for a stipulated price, possibly agreeing to give so many hours' work a day, or so much money in lieu of time.

That some such arrangement subsisted between them is evident from the diary which the young artist early began, and continued to keep almost to the end of his long life. At first it was little more than a rough memorandum-book of receipts and expenditures, jotted down in lead-pencil ; but very soon it developed into a carefully-kept journal, in which all his daily doings, together with receipts and expenditures, were carefully noted down. The diary was begun in 1810, and the first volume

includes that and the following year. The second volume is missing, and there is in consequence a break from 1811 until 1817, which is very regrettable, those years being very important ones in the young artist's development.

Apart from the more personal items, these volumes incidentally contain much that is of interest as touching the artist's contemporaries. He puts it on record that while he was in his Hampstead Road lodging (nearly opposite St. James's Chapel), he had David Wilkie (who lived in Soho Row) for a near neighbour, and saw the famous Scotch *genre* painter 'at work upon his "Card-Players" and his "Blind Fiddler." ' There would appear to be some mistake about this statement, however, as 1809, the time of Linnell's occupancy of his lodgings in Hampstead Road, hardly agrees with the dates of those pictures.

We find that as early as this (1810-11) he was adding to his income by giving instruction in drawing, his price for which was half a guinea a lesson. He continued to do so until shortly after his marriage, when, his time being fully occupied with better-paying work, he gave up teaching. Amongst the number of his pupils were Lady Mary Bennett and Mary Wollstonecraft-Godwin, afterwards the wife of Shelley, although both these pupils belong to a later period than that at which we have at present arrived.

Mulready's name constantly recurs in the early years of the diary, not infrequently as a borrower,

though just as often as a repayer. Money in those days does not seem to have had the knack of staying with Mulready, and so he had to run a sort of rough banking account with his friends. Flaxman's name also occurs in the diary. He delivered his opening lecture on sculpture at the Royal Academy in February, 1811, and Linnell makes an entry of the fact that he attended it.

But the chief items entered are of work begun, continued, or finished, and, incidentally, of the moneys received therefrom. It is a record from beginning to end of work, hard and constant. First, in these years, there were so many hours given to work for his father; then so many hours spent on this picture or that, lessons, and so forth. Occasionally we come across a note of some pleasuring, though not often. One of his greatest treats was to spend an evening at the opera, or to go and listen to an oratorio, treating himself now and then to a five-shilling place. Sometimes he and Mulready would go to the theatre when there was anything good to be seen. He did not willingly miss a Shakespearian performance, or the appearance of a great actor or actress, like the elder Kean, Mrs. Siddons, or Macready, for whom he had the greatest admiration. Shakespeare was always a prime favourite with him, and he studied his works with assiduity, committing many passages to memory, and often quoting them in conversation to his latest days.

If he runs out into the country for a change, the

study of Nature and subjects to paint are his chief objects. In 1809 he went to Hastings for a month, several pictures being the result, as, for instance, ‘A View on the Beach, Hastings,’ exhibited in the British Gallery (1810), also his curiously named ‘Fisherman waiting for the Ferry, Hastings,’ exhibited at the same place in the following year. There is, of course, no ferry at Hastings, and so we suspect an error.

In May, 1811, we find him with his father at Dover, whither they have gone to attend a picture sale. After three days spent in the old Cinque Port, John leaves his father to go home by coach alone, whilst he takes to the road. On the first day he walks from Dover to Ashford, taking Folkestone and Hythe by the way, twenty-four miles being the distance covered, which, together with a sketch, makes a good day’s work. The next day he goes from Ashford through Maidstone (where he dines) to Kingsdown—thirty-four miles. Again he makes a sketch. A walk of twenty-one miles on the following day (Sunday, the 5th) brings the intrepid pedestrian to London. These particulars are from his own notes, and he finishes up with the item : ‘Ale on the road, 2s. 6d.’ In the earlier part of the same year he had had a run out to Epsom, probably to sketch. But we are getting on a little too fast.

Soon after the sale of his ‘Fishermen in a Boat on the River,’ exhibited in the British Institution in 1808, and previously referred to, the artist received a flattering visit at his father’s house from Mr.

Ridley Colborne (afterwards Lord Colborne), who commissioned him to finish his picture of the 'Fishermen' (the price agreed upon being fifty guineas), which was sent to the Royal Academy, and well hung, in 1808. This commission led to two others from the same patron. One was for a portrait of Mrs. Colborne and child. The other was a subject-picture, representing a woman at a table drinking, the figure being painted from Mulready's mother, and considered a very good likeness. Linnell subsequently painted Mr. Colborne's portrait and a subject-picture, in which the latter, as a gamekeeper, presented a hare to his wife.

In the following year (1809), along with his 'Removing Timber,' he exhibited at the British Institution a coast piece, entitled 'Fishing-Boats,' which was sold to Mr. Ord for twenty-three guineas.

His subjects at the British Institution for the next year were 'A Cottage Door,' 'A Landscape,' and 'A View on the Beach, Hastings.'

About the same time one of the most famous of his early pictures, 'St. John preaching in the Wilderness,' was sketched out. This picture is noteworthy as being his first attempt to combine landscape with a religious subject, of which he afterwards painted so many. We must take it as indicating the influence the Italian school was having upon the young artist, combined with the awakening of religious feelings, which were presently to have so powerful an effect upon his life and character. The

picture, however, although exhibited at the British Institution in 1808, was not finished, and remained upon the wall of his studio in that state for many years, and was only finally completed at the request of his friend, the Rev. E. T. Daniel, who greatly admired the work, and agreed to purchase it, if, when finished, no other patron should be forthcoming.

Linnell did not remain long in his lodgings in Hampstead Road. Possibly, being of a social disposition, he found living alone too dull; not unlikely he found it too expensive likewise. For, although always busy, and constantly making money, the demands upon him must have been great, especially as he was, as it were, buying his liberty from his father. Anyway, in 1809 we find that he became in some way joint tenant with Mulready of apartments at No. 30, Francis Street, Bedford Square. Possibly, however, they may only have had a painting-room in common.

Mulready's occupancy of the lodgings in Francis Street extended over 1808 and 1809; whereas during that time Linnell's address, as given in the Exhibition catalogues, was still No. 2, Streatham Street, his father's house.

It was while living in this place that Mulready painted his 'Carpenter's Shop,' one of the best known of his pictures. Linnell constantly saw him at work upon it, and the experience could not have been other than beneficial to him. There Linnell painted his 'Landscape—Morning,' exhibited in the

Royal Academy in 1810, along with his ‘Waiting for the Ferry.’

At this humble lodging Mulready used to receive a little company, and Linnell ever recalled with pleasure the happy gatherings. The guests were regaled with the simplest of fare, which consisted of bread and butter and eggs, with porter to wash them down. But these did not constitute the whole of the feast; there was lively and varied conversation on art and the like, mingled with music and singing. Among the guests who frequented the gatherings were several who could sing, and the young artist himself learned to tune his voice so as to be able to join in an occasional part-song or glee.

George Dawe (for whom about this time—1809 or 1810—Linnell and his friend Hunt worked on a transparency designed to celebrate a victory over the French) was an occasional visitor. So was ‘Billy’ Dixon. Billy was the better liked of the two, because he had a good voice, and was pleased to sing and entertain the company; while Dawe was wont to sit in a corner, with a green shade over his eyes, and merely look on, appearing even to be quizzical.

Mulready seems at this time to have irretrievably broken with his wife. We know that his marriage with the elder of the two sisters of Varley (like her brother, an accomplished artist, and a regular exhibitor at the old Water-Colour Society) proved an unhappy one, and that their life together was of short duration. An incident that took place at this

period, and that Linnell leaves on record, seems to indicate that the separation had already taken place.

Mulready and Linnell made a trip of three days' duration to Gravesend and Chatham, starting at night by boat from London Bridge. Linnell never forgot this trip down the river, and used in particular to regret that he could not sketch the scene on board at night. Most of the passengers were huddled together in the cabin—many of them the worse for drink—and with the dim light of the lamp shining upon them from above, they presented a Rembrandtesque picture which one can well believe made the young artist's fingers itch to be at work. The two walked back to London, arriving at Francis Street at midnight.

The incident that follows is curious. Either they could not, or did not, care to wake the landlady, and so had to resort to a bit of housebreaking to get in. Mulready climbed upon the garden-wall at the back of the house, and, springing thence to a landing window, managed to clutch the sill and at the same time to throw up the sash, and so let himself in, helping afterwards his less athletic companion to enter. That Mrs. Francis, their landlady, never knew that they had gained ingress in such a forcible manner is not very surprising, when we learn, from Linnell's recollections, the sort of woman they had to do with. She was a great oddity in her way, and used to go to bed when she wanted to get tipsy, which was not infrequent, considering that the safest place in which to indulge in such excesses.

She was a frequent source of amusement to her artist tenants on account of her eccentricities. She invariably called Linnell ‘Linen,’ and used to twit him for not calling himself ‘Cotton’ in place of her substitution for his name. Another of her Malapropisms was that of designating the members of the Academy ‘Academinions’—a name which, coming from anyone else, might have led to suspicions of a satirical meaning.

Among other humorous anecdotes about her that Linnell was wont to relate with great gusto was how on one occasion she attacked the tax-collector, who, for some reason not quite clear, wore a white wig, with her mop, crying, as she prodded him, ‘What do you want here with your dirty cauliflower wig?’

In the latter part of 1809 the two friends went to lodge at the Kensington Gravel Pits, where they remained until August, 1811, having Callcott as a near neighbour in the Mall. Partly here, and partly at his father’s house, Linnell painted one of the most famous of his early pictures, ‘The Quoit-Players,’ which was exhibited at the British Institution in 1811. In this canvas, which measures 32 by 41 inches, we have one of the best exemplifications of the effect of Dutch art upon his early style. It shows the two leading characteristics of the great masters of the Dutch school, simplicity of subject and truth to Nature. In front of some cottages on a common several men are playing quoits; two others stand looking on, leaning against the trunk of

an old withered tree ; a man and a boy are standing further off, waiting to mark the pitch of the quoit. There is a wood in the background, and a distant view on the right. It is similar in treatment to the ‘Cutting Timber in Autumn,’ but is lighter and brighter in tone.

‘The Quoit-Players’ was bought by Sir Thomas Baring for 75 guineas. Seven-and-thirty years later (1848) this production of the youth of nineteen was sold at Sir Thomas Baring’s sale at Christie’s for 230 guineas, the purchaser being Creswick, the frame-maker, of Old Compton Street, Soho. The painter, who went to see it in the sale-room, was gratified to find that it was still in excellent condition. It subsequently passed into the hands of Mr. G. Simpson, of Reigate, for 1,000 guineas.

The other pictures exhibited at the British Institution along with ‘The Quoit-Players’ were ‘A Scene on the Banks of the Thames,’ ‘Fishing-Boats—a Scene from Nature,’ and ‘the above-named Fishermen—Hastings.’

The artist’s Academy picture for the same year (1811) was ‘The Ducking—a Scene from Nature.’ This was the last picture he sent to Somerset House until 1821.

At this time also Linnell painted a picture entitled ‘Boys in a Boat.’ While at work upon it he was stricken with painter’s colic. He used a large quantity of flake-white in it, and was incautious enough to have the canvas in the room where he slept. He tried to relieve his pain by exercise, but in vain.

Then someone suggested castor-oil as a remedy, whereupon he had recourse thereto, and was cured.

Thus the youthful aspirant was adding achievement to achievement, and gradually working his way up the steep ‘where Fame’s proud temple shines afar.’ He was the most indefatigable of workers, and his versatility was as remarkable as his industry. He was not above cleaning and repairing pictures ; he worked on the canvases of other artists, helping where they were weak, and putting in figures for them. This he did very frequently for John Varley, and recently at Christie’s there was a landscape of ‘Old’ Crome’s in which he had painted a flock of sheep.

He was an adept in water-colours as well as in oil, although the latter was the medium which he preferred. As we have seen, he did portraits as well as landscapes ; and he used the graver with no less facility than the palette and brush. Indeed, everything that touched the domain of art he appeared determined to make his own.

CHAPTER V.

Awakening of Religious Thought—Meeting with Celebrities—Divergent Views—Becomes a Baptist—John Martin—Thomas Palmer—Study of the Scriptures—A Runaway Match—Mr. Tatham—Engagement—Reading.

I HAVE referred in the foregoing chapter to the awakening of religious thought in our artist. He had been brought up nominally as a member of the Episcopal Church, and used to go with his parents to Bedford Chapel, which was, as it were, just across the way from their house. But anything he heard or saw there does not appear to have made much impression upon his mind. As already stated, he occupied his time during the service in drawing either with a pin upon the front of the pew, or else in imagination upon the air. Like most youths of his age, he was full of life, fond of fun and frolic, and not much given to serious thought, except in connection with the art he had espoused. When the hours of work were over, and he was tired of study, he liked to be in the streets. There was life there, and action and colour, and these were the things upon which he chiefly fed mentally.

While an Academy student, although not physically

so strong as many of the other students, and unable to compete with them in all their rough and boisterous games, yet he was as fond of frolic and of active exertion as any of them, and what he lacked in strength of muscle he made up for in vigour of will and activity. Indeed, in some respects these qualities gave him the advantage, as in a little trial of muscle and wind with his long-legged fellow-student David Wilkie (of which we are afforded a glimpse in his autobiography, written in old age), when he led the bony Scotchman a dance down Drury Lane, and, sprite-like, eluded him at the last, so fleet and agile was he.

But the time came when serious thoughts began to occupy his mind. During his years of tuition under Varley, and afterwards at the genial master's house, where he, and, indeed, almost anybody with gifts of thought or performance, was ever welcome, he met with men of all shades of political and religious opinion, and must have heard the most opposite and extreme views on nearly every subject advanced and discussed by some of the ablest and most sincere minds of the day. Not only did he meet Shelley and William Godwin in this way, but also many of the latter's complexion of thought. Amongst others he met Charles Lamb in this motley circle of celebrities.

Of Godwin he probably made the acquaintance through Mulready, who did many book illustrations for him. For a time he appears to have given drawing-lessons to Charles Clairmont, the son of Mrs.

Clairmont, Godwin's second wife, and in Mr. C. Kegan Paul's biography of William Godwin (1876) there is a letter from the boy to his stepfather, then attending the deathbed of his mother at East Dereham, in which he says : ' We are all going to-morrow to Hampstead Heath to spend a whole day, and Mr. and Mrs. Mulready, Mr. and Mrs. Dawe, and Mr. Linnell are going with us. Mr. Linnell and Mr. Mulready will sketch part of the time, which will be very amusing.' Incidentally we obtain a hint of Mulready's opinion of his friend's ability as a painter, the writer of the letter recording almost incredulously that ' Linnell is the best painter that he (Mulready) knows.' In later life our artist used to recall having frequently met Godwin at his business place in Skinner Street, Snow Hill.

The views Linnell then heard broached and freely discussed in this circle of artists and thinkers must have left their impression upon a mind so open as his, and given him food for serious thought. Society was then a very seething caldron of ideas, socialist, revolutionary, atheistic, wildly impracticable, and mildly utilitarian. Nothing seemed stable ; the very foundations of society itself appeared to be giving way, and to require new methods to hold them together. Every other man also was prepared with his nostrum or panacea for the ills under which the world was suffering. The class of men amongst whom our artist chiefly moved was specially liable to be influenced by this whirl of ideas ; and it speaks much for the strength and balance of his mind, and

the clearness of his perception, that he was led away by none of the prevailing theories. That he afterwards became a Liberal, and a philosophical Republican generally in his way of thinking, may have arisen in a sense from the views he then heard advanced. But John Linnell was always of so logical a cast of mind, so diligently sought out and, as far as he could, arrived at the root of things, and upon them based his opinions and conduct, and his Liberalism or Republicanism were so much on all fours with his religious views, that one cannot help thinking that they were the result of similar critical analysis and rigid induction.

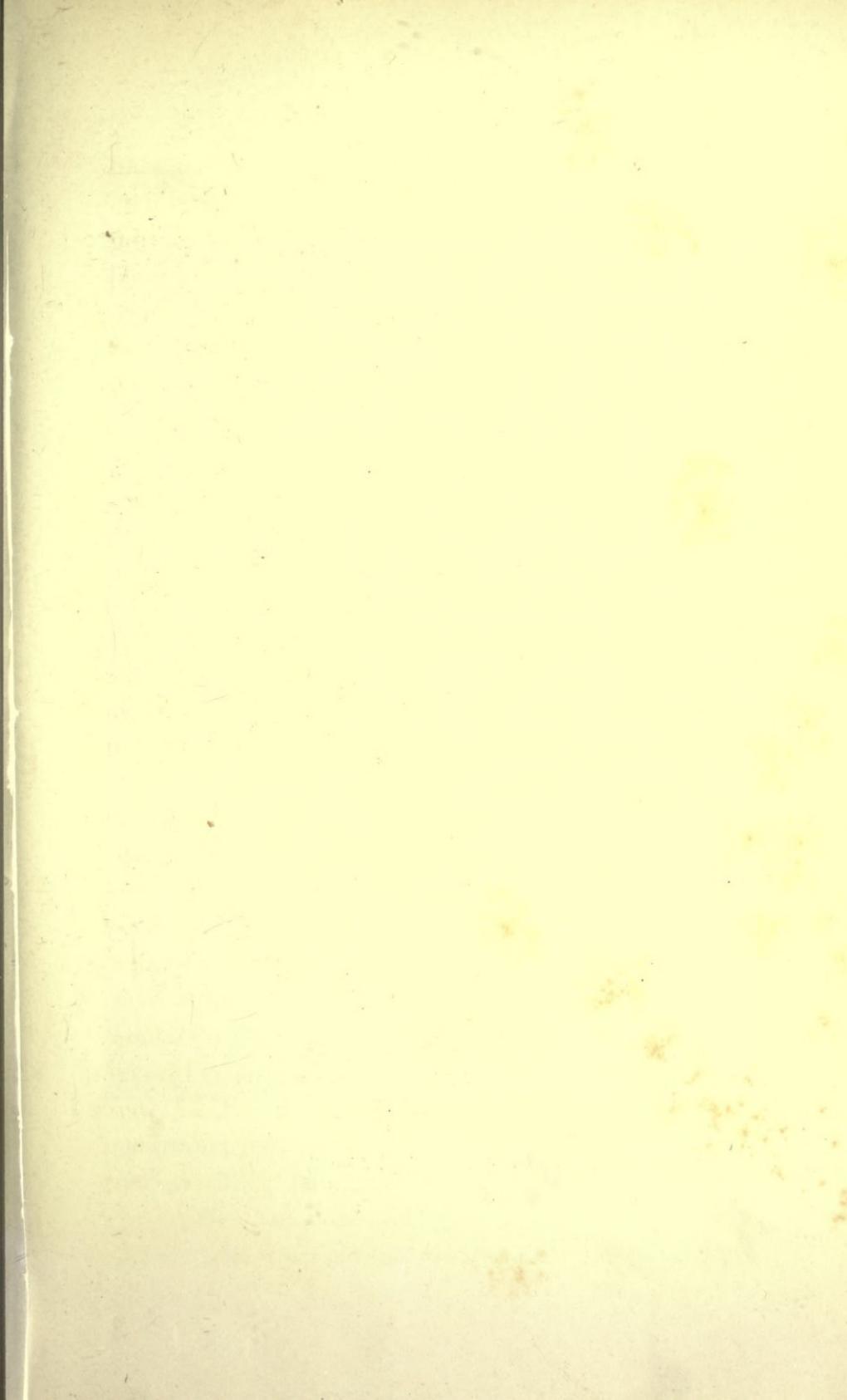
It was now that those religious views took their rise, and it was one of the Varleys who was the means of directing him to the source whence he imbibed the spiritual truth which coloured and gave character to the whole of his subsequent life. As already stated, Cornelius Varley was the only one of the three brothers who was at all of a religious turn. With him even it appears to have been more emotional than fundamental. But whether that be so or not, he was in the habit of attending the ministrations of a celebrated preacher of that time, the Rev. John Martin, pastor of the Baptist Church, Keppel Street, Bloomsbury, a man whose discourses he so greatly admired and praised so warmly that he induced John Linnell to go and hear him. The result was that the young man was so pleased with the eloquent preacher that he went again and again to hear him, and ended by becoming a convert to

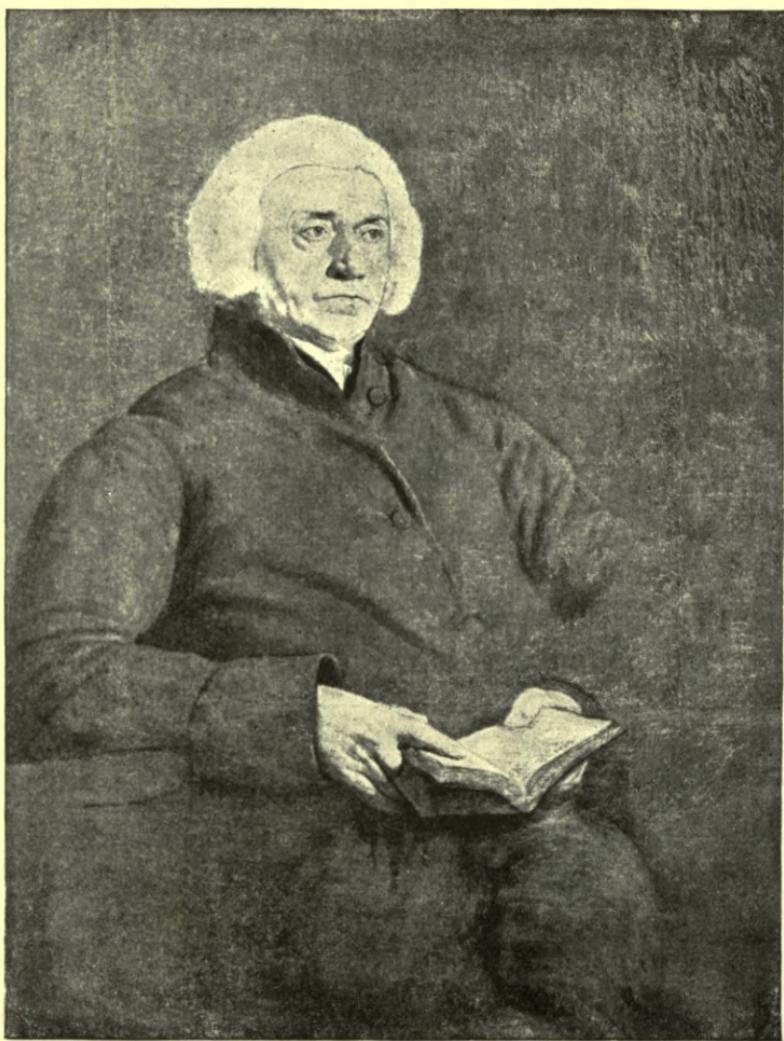
the principles he taught. A conviction of that kind to a mind like Linnell's could only mean one thing : what he believed he must act up to. Hence, having adopted the tenets of the Baptist faith, he resolved to follow them out strictly in his life. He accordingly made a confession of his faith, was baptized by immersion, and formally joined the Baptist communion.

All this was not done without great thought and preparatory study ; but having once settled in his mind what was the right course for him to pursue, there was no possibility of half-measures with him. Certain directions were inseparably connected with the promise of blessing, and so deep were his religious convictions that he was compelled to follow the directions in order to gain the blessing. Throughout his long life he never ceased to be thankful that he had acted upon those early convictions.

For Mr. John Martin,* the man who had wrought these happy changes in him, Linnell had ever the greatest esteem and admiration. He considered him a very 'remarkable man, most upright in every sense of the word, physically as well as morally.' Although 'rather dogmatical and sometimes overbearing,' yet 'he was opposed to all priestly assumption except his own.' Of his sermons, Linnell, writing many years afterwards, says they 'were simple, earnest, and logical, without affectation, and highly esteemed by all the best judges and the best

* He died in 1820 at the age of eighty, after having been the pastor of Keppel Street Church forty-one years, resigning in 1815.





JOHN MARTIN.

(From an oil-painting by J. Linnell, 1812.)

people.' One cannot look at his portrait (painted by his young disciple) or read the volume of his published sermons without being convinced that such was the case.

This portrait, executed in 1812, is one of the best Linnell ever did, and any man who produced such a work at the age of nineteen might well be proud of the achievement. The original is still in the possession of the Linnell family. The artist also engraved a fine plate of it, upwards of seven hundred copies of which were sold.

Linnell joined the Baptist community in January, 1812, consequently when he was in his twentieth year. This step was fraught with importance in more ways than one. It is always of importance to a man that he should come to an understanding with himself as to the spiritual side of his nature. When he has done that, and has, as it were, marked out his course in that direction, he can turn his energies with more calm, and with a less divided front, to the business of his everyday life. This was one of the things which the settlement of his religious convictions did for John Linnell.

Another thing that it did for him was to introduce him to an entirely new circle of acquaintances, many of whom became life-long friends. Amongst these was Mr. Thomas Palmer, one of whose daughters was afterwards to become his wife. Mr. Palmer was a coal-merchant and bookseller, and carried on business in Swallow Street, Oxford Street (afterwards demolished to

make room for Regent Street). He was a meek and unassuming man, very exact and methodical in character, and of a thoughtful and studious turn. For one of his position and opportunities he was a very well-read, and even a learned, man. He had a good knowledge of Hebrew, and was able to give valuable assistance to his cousin (Mr. Thomas Chevalier,* a surgeon of repute of that day) in the Biblical studies to which he devoted his leisure-time. Mr. Chevalier was also a member of the Keppel Street Church. He and Mr. Palmer were brought up together, and educated for the same profession by their uncle Sturgis; but in the end Palmer was obliged to relinquish surgery as a profession for want of the nerve and courage necessary to practise. But though this deficiency spoiled his success in life, it did not prevent him from acquiring much knowledge and winning the esteem of all who knew him for his many amiable qualities.

Linnell had the greatest respect for Mr. Palmer, considering him in every respect a true Christian. After a short time spent as under-secretary to a nobleman, he devoted himself to business, and though he did not thrive greatly, and could not, therefore, dispense the hospitality that many of his friends of the Keppel Street congregation did, yet his humble abode in Swallow Street was visited by the best and most intellectual people connected with that church.

* Thomas Chevalier, F.R.S., F.S.A., F.H.S., was Surgeon-extraordinary to the King, and Professor of Anatomy and Surgery to the Royal College of Surgeons.

There, too, Linnell was a constant visitor, and his intimacy with the family soon led to an engagement between him and Mr. Palmer's second daughter, Mary. The friendships and associations that ripened under Mr. Palmer's roof were very valuable to him, and redounded to his profit, not only in an intellectual and moral, but also in a more temporal direction. He painted a number of portraits of persons connected with the church, and in other ways broadened his business connections through his new acquaintances. Amongst others he won the friendship of Mr. Bagster, the publisher, who was a member of Keppel Street, and for whom he subsequently visited Hertfordshire and Derbyshire in order to make drawings to illustrate a new edition of Walton and Cotton's '*Angler*'.

Linnell derived much personal benefit from Mr. Palmer's acquaintance. Under his influence his early taste for reading was strengthened and encouraged, and he turned his attention to the careful study of the Scriptures. With his friend's assistance he began to learn Hebrew, and he records that he often sat up half the night in Mr. Palmer's little room engaged in these and other literary pursuits. In short, at this period he laid the foundation of a very considerable acquaintance with books and general literature.

Amongst others who at this time belonged to the Keppel Street community was Mr. Charles Heathcote Tatham, who was the architect of the church, and the father of Frederick Tatham, the sculptor and portrait-painter in water-colours, subsequently

an intimate friend of William Blake. Mr. Charles Tatham was an architect of some repute, having studied in Italy and exhibited at the Royal Academy (for the first time in 1797). His daughter Julia married Mr. George Richmond, the portrait-painter, afterwards the Royal Academician. Mr. Tatham was at that time a man of wealth and position, and had hopes for his daughter beyond the poor portrait-painter that Richmond then was. In consequence of his opposition to the match the two eloped, and were married at Gretna Green, Mr. Samuel Palmer, the artist, lending them the money for the purpose.

Tatham was deeply annoyed at the marriage, and related the occurrence to Linnell in great grief, fearing his daughter had done a foolish thing. Linnell consoled him, telling him he made a great mistake, and that he ought rather to congratulate himself upon the match, because he had every confidence that Richmond would prove to be an honour to the family.

Tatham was no less surprised than gratified, and exclaimed :

* 'Do you think so? I am so delighted to hear you say so!'

He had reason to be pleased, for Richmond, as is well known, subsequently became one of the most successful portrait-painters of the day.

Referring to his acquaintance with Mr. Tatham, Linnell afterwards wrote : 'Tatham was much among the great, had large works in hand for them, had been in Italy, and was a man of cultivated taste, and

naturally a proud man, which appeared unhappily the case at the latter part of his career, for had he been wise enough to accept of commissions for works of inferior size he might have been fully employed ; but he stood out for large jobs from the titled great, and would not undertake jobs from builders and others. The consequence was he mortgaged his property, and ended by being only the overseer of twenty poor men for some charity.' In other words, he was appointed Warden of Trinity Hospital, East Greenwich, in which position he died in 1842.

Tatham published a number of works connected more or less with architecture and decoration, amongst others 'A Miscellaneous Collection of Original Drawings, by John Linnell, made and for the most part executed during an extensive practice of many years in the first line of his profession by John Linnell, upholsterer, carver, and cabinet-maker. Selected, etc., by C. H. Tatham, architect, 1800.' This John Linnell Mr. F. G. Stephens supposes to have been an ancestor of our artist.

To judge by a number of letters written by him to Linnell, Mr. Tatham must have been an amiable as well as an able man. One of them, bearing the postmark March 29, 1817, is as follows :

‘ Queen Street, Mayfair,
‘ Friday.

‘ DEAR LINNELL,

‘ I took your letter to Lord Morpeth this morning, who recommended me to forward it to Lord Carlisle, which I have done by post.

'There happened to come into the room a beautiful girl about Julia's age, and Lord Morpeth said he wanted a drawing of her, but could not afford it. I instantly said, "If you only mean a sketch of the head, Linnell is the man who will most gladly do anything of that kind for you upon your own terms."

'After a little hesitation he said, "Well, if you will bring Mr. Linnell here any morning after ten days" (he going out of town), "I should be glad to see him." So bear this in mind. It will be another connection for you.

'Yours ever,

'C. H. TATHAM.'

Another characteristic letter is without date :

'DEAR LINNELL,

'If you will do me the favour to come here to-morrow and sketch in some bass-relievos to a drawing of an elevation I am making, you will do me a kindness ; besides which I want much to consult you, before I begin the shadows of the drawings, as to the style of finishing them. Pray do come, and fix the hour by bearer—say, one o'clock—and I will have a lunch ready for you. Ten o'clock would suit me best. I must recommend you the following motto for Mr. Martin's print, which you are now upon for the sermons :

‘“Unmov'd,
Unshaken, unseduc'd, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal ;
Nor number, nor example, with him wrought,
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind.”’

Paradise Lost, Book V.

‘Pray think of this. Mr. Chevalier approves it as being most applicable to our venerable and incomparable friend.

‘Ever yours truly,

‘C. H. TATHAM.

‘P.S.—Pray show the bearer, Mr. Rampling, your paintings ; he is assisting me.’

Linnell’s engagement to Mary Palmer was undoubtedly a very momentous step for him to take ; it was, indeed, the turning-point of his life. It caused him to look very carefully to his position as a business man, and to make a fair calculation of his prospects. As a result of his survey he resolved to redouble his exertions, in order to improve his condition and lay the foundation of prosperity.

He at the same time began to read more systematically, and with a view to the general enlargement and cultivation of his mind. Although he had become religious, he in no sense became sectarian. While he held with the Baptists, he did so only in so far as they seemed to keep closest to the truth of the New Testament. He considered that in their views and practice in regard to baptism they were the only sect who had the sanction of the Gospels. He was very firm in his adhesion to this central doctrine of the Baptists, and used to affirm that the Pope, though he confidently claimed all baptized persons as his subjects, was little aware that neither he nor any of his real subjects had ever been baptized at all, and his claim to rule over

Christians generally was nullified by the flaw of their baptism. Another determined view he held was that the present Anglican sacramental ceremony is a mere alternation of the Roman Catholic Mass, and not by any means the original institution.

But notwithstanding these strongly-held views, Linnell's mind was large enough, and his sympathies broad enough, to allow to all men what he claimed for himself—absolute freedom of conscience. Especially Catholic were his tastes in literature. Albeit, from the day that he joined the Keppel Street Church to the day of his death, he set the Bible above all books, yet it by no means caused him to overlook or undervalue our justly-prized classics. Perhaps in his general reading poetry took the first place, his favourite authors, after Shakespeare, being Milton and Burns. Nor did he confine his attention to Milton's poems alone, but found in his prose writings also much that was sympathetic and strengthening to his line of thought. Of Burns's songs he committed many to memory, and was fond of repeating them.

He was also a great lover of Homer, and took especial delight in Chapman's robust translation, of which he subsequently bought William Blake's fine folio copy. He was an omnivorous reader, as a short list culled from his purchases between 1814 and 1816 will show. Much has been said of late about the best hundred books. Here, then, are fifty purchased and read by a successful artist on

what we may call the threshold of his career—at the time, that is, when he was forming both his style as an artist and his character as a man :

Ferguson's 'Astronomy,' Locke on Education, Booth's 'Reign of Grace,' Herbert's Hymns, Robertson's 'Key to the Hebrew Bible,' Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs' (edition of 1648, which cost £5), Greek Lexicon, Plato, Evelyn on Forest Trees, 'Popular Description of the Human Body,' Mosheim's 'Ecclesiastical History,' Caxton's 'Institutes,' Campbell on the Gospels, Spearman's 'Inquiry into Philosophy,' Addison's 'Evidences,' Lowth's 'Isaiah,' Locke on Toleration, Booth's 'Legal Hope,' Beattie's 'Essay on Truth,' 'Life of Bishop Ridley,' 'Fuller's Letters,' Grenville Sharp's 'Hebrew Tracts,' 'Æsop's Fables,' Berwick's 'Quadrupeds,' Dryden's Virgil, Prior's Poems, Hervey's Works, St. Augustine, 'Hudibras,' 'Pilgrim's Progress,' 'Sir Isaac Newton's Letters,' Bacon's Works, Cicero 'On the Nature of the Gods,' Oldfield on Reason, Bloomfield's 'Farmer's Boy,' Sheridan on Education, Chaucer's Works (black letter, 1612), Bailey's Dictionary, Rapin's 'Critical Essays,' Locke on the Understanding.

The list might be considerably augmented by borrowed books ; but the above works indicate the bent of the artist's mind, and the direction in which his studies lay.

CHAPTER VI.

Tour in Wales—George Lewis—Drawings and Sketches—First Sight of Mountains—Importance of Figure-Drawing—Impressions of Welsh Scenery—Return to London—‘The Gravel Pits’—Return to his Father’s House—‘Bayswater in 1814.’

IN July, 1811, Linnell had taken a second-floor at No. 11, Queen Street, Edgware Road, with a Captain Strutt, ‘a most respectable person,’ as he records, at a rent of twenty pounds a year, and removed his pictures and other belongings thither from Streatham Street in August. This is given as his address in the Catalogues of the British Institution Exhibition for the years 1812 and 1813. But in the latter year’s Catalogue of the Exhibition of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours, to which he sent ‘The Bird-Catcher—a Scene from Nature,’ the address given is 81, Edgware Road. The reason for this seems clear. When the exhibition took place—in the middle of the year—he had resolved upon a tour in Wales, and this was simply an address for letters or other communications. In his journal he says: ‘After giving up my lodgings in Queen Street, I went at the end of August to Wales for a month with G. Lewis.’

The journey to Wales appears to have been one of the immediate results of his engagement to Mary Palmer. He had carefully ‘taken stock’ of his position, his acquirements, and prospects in view of the important step he had taken in selecting the lady who was to be his wife. No doubt he felt also, as a result of the examination of what he had achieved, and what was still to be done to make his position what it should be before venturing upon marriage, that one very necessary thing was to enlarge his experience, as well as the stock of material upon which he could work. With some such thoughts in his mind, therefore, he seized upon the opportunity which now presented itself of visiting the Principality.

George Lewis, the engraver, and the well-known illustrator of Dibdin’s ‘Bibliomania,’ was going for a month’s tour in Wales, and proposed that Linnell should accompany him. They set out from London towards the end of August, proceeding straight to Llangollen by coach. After staying a night at the latter place, they started to walk to Bettws-y-Coed, going through Cernioge. Thence they proceeded to Dolwyddelan and the adjacent valleys; then to Capel Curig and the Pass, and so on to Llanberis, making a special journey down the valley in order to get a view of the Isle of Anglesey. Snowdon, also, and the adjacent valleys were visited. And at every turn sketches were taken.

To enumerate all the studies that the artist made at the above places would be impossible; but the

names of a few may be given to show what an indefatigable worker he was. At Llangollen he made two or three sketches in black and white chalk; at Bettws-y-Coed and neighbourhood three studies in water-colours and chalk; and at Dolwyddelan some six studies, either in water-colours or in chalk. Further, in the Dolwyddelan valleys he made six water-colour sketches. Between Bettws and Capel Curig he completed six more studies in water-colours and chalk. Of the Pass of Llanberis he took home one study; of Llanberis some eight studies in water-colours and chalk; also a water-colour drawing from the end of the Llanberis Valley of the Isle of Anglesey. The other named studies, the fruit of this journey, are two studies in water-colours, entitled 'View of Snowdon,' two chalk studies 'From the Top of Snowdon,' and one water-colour study made at Beddgelert.

In addition to the above, there are about twenty studies in water-colour on which no particular locality is marked, while of sketches in black and white there are over fifty.

In some notes of this tour made years afterwards, Linnell says it was his and his companion's custom to rise early, and walk eight or nine miles before breakfast, which consisted of eggs, milk, and bread and butter. They generally had the same fare for dinner, with sometimes beer in the place of milk. Fresh meat was not to be had in the wild parts where they went, and bacon they did not care for. Towards the end of their tour together, Lewis's

elder brother joined them, and they took long walks over the wildest parts of the mountains.

The sight of this most romantic district of Wales was a perfect revelation to the young artist, who, London born and bred, had previously seen nothing higher than a Kentish hill or Sussex down. In his autobiographical notes Linnell records, with the freshness as it were of yesterday, the deep impression the mountain scenery made upon his mind, and especially the scenery of some of the valleys near Snowdon. The experience was one never to be forgotten; and year after year, with the aid of his studies and sketches, he reproduced the scenes which he had visited in picture after picture of astonishing brilliancy and power.

Not the least of the surprise and delight he experienced was to see realized what had always charmed him in the pictures of the Italian masters, and particularly in the backgrounds of Raphael and Titian. The Welsh landscapes of the Varleys and their school he always found 'to be conventional, and the refuge of those who had no power in figure-drawing and individualization.' He thus came to the conclusion that elaborate drawing, such as can only be acquired by drawing from the nude, is essential in every department of painting, in trees and rocks, as well as in the figure itself. It was this quality which he felt was the source of all that he most admired in the works of the great men of Italy and Germany.

These views of Linnell's in regard to the value

of figure-drawing are so strikingly at variance with much that has been expressed in respect to drawing in landscape art that one is justified in dwelling somewhat on the point, especially when, as is recorded, a lecturer at the Royal Academy, himself an R.A., can tell the students that if they cannot draw they must take to landscape-painting. Linnell wrote emphatically : ‘Drawing at the Royal Academy, and painting there from the life, separated me in practice from the Varley school of art, and gave me perceptions and taste more allied to the Italian masters. This I found when I went to Wales.’

So thoroughly did the beauty of some of the scenery in the neighbourhood of Snowdon carry him away from all previous associations with modern art, that he used to say he could almost fancy himself living in the times of Jacob and Esau, and might expect to meet them coming towards him and his travelling companions with their flocks, so primitive, so beautiful, and so wild did everything appear to his fresh and unsophisticated mind. Especially did the sight of the eagles coming out of their nests inside the crags, breasting the air upon their mighty wings, and, after circling aloft for awhile in their untamed freedom, disappearing again—especially did this sight astonish the London artist. It must be remembered, in order rightly to understand his feelings, that Linnell was just fresh from his new religious experiences and his study of the Bible. Everything, therefore, was apt to become imbued

with the fervour of religious thought, and by that means, perhaps, its effect was deepened.

Can we suppose that when that idea of Jacob and Esau occurred to him it was not made more vivid by the sight of the eagles, and the recollection of the words of Jeremiah: ‘Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab.’ He never forgot how they appealed to him.

At the end of a month Linnell parted from his companions and proceeded alone to Shrewsbury, where he arrived so footsore that he was able to walk no further. It had been his intention to continue his tramp to London, but his feet were so bad that he was obliged to take the coach. On his return to London he put up at his father’s, where he remained, paying for his board and lodging, until 1817. He records that Mr. Chevalier attended him for his sore feet ; but, though he salved and lotioned them for some time, they got no better, and finally his treatment was discarded for that of Mrs. Linnell’s bread-poultices, with the best effects.

During his residence at Captain Strutt’s in Queen Street, our artist painted his picture entitled ‘The Dairy—Morning,’ a charming bit of landscape, with a white horse and other figures in the foreground. It was exhibited at the British Institution in 1812, and afterwards at Liverpool, where it was sold.

His other pictures exhibited this year in Pall Mall were, ‘A Scene on the Coast near Dover,’ and ‘A View on the Thames.’

In Queen Street also he painted ‘The Gravel-

Pits' (39 by 25 inches), which is among the best of his early works. This was the only picture he exhibited in the British Institution in 1813. But, albeit well placed and greatly admired—Flaxman in particular praising it very highly—it did not sell. Nor was it purchased by the Institution. This the painter always considered a proof of the apathy and neglect that characterized the doings of the Institution, which was supported by wealthy patrons whose object was the encouragement of this description of art. It will be acknowledged that there was some ground for the criticism when it is stated that the picture was afterwards bought at Liverpool by Creswick for £40 (the price originally put upon it), that it was subsequently sold for £400, and later realized a much higher figure.

Linnell's object in going to live once more in Streatham Street appears to have been the desire to lay by something to begin married life with. Probably he had found living in lodgings not so economical as he would have liked. He therefore came to an arrangement with his parents, hired a room from them, and paid for his board. They were better able to make such an arrangement now than they had been formerly, in consequence of the marriage of one of his sisters, which would leave them more room to dispose of. He did not quit the parental roof again until he was married.

Here he worked still more industriously, and studied with more zeal and earnestness than he had ever done before. He covered the walls of the

room in which he worked with old prints after the Carracci, Titian, and others ; so that the Old Masters, his exemplars, were ever before him.

Here he painted two pictures of Welsh subjects, which he sold to his brother-in-law, Mr. Chance, for £43. This amount, together with the £40 received for his picture of 'The Gravel-Pits,' formed the nest-egg of the savings he was endeavouring to lay by against the day of his marriage.

Meanwhile (1813) Linnell had become a member of the Old Water-Colour Society, which, in consequence of internal dissensions, had extended its scope and title, transforming itself into the Society of Painters in Oil and Water-Colours. A large number of the old members seceded, whilst a still larger number of new men, chiefly painters in oil, were admitted. Linnell was among the latter, and henceforth became a regular contributor to the society's exhibitions, which were held in the 'Large Room,' Spring Gardens. As already stated, his first exhibit in Spring Gardens was 'The Bird-Catcher—a Scene from Nature.' This picture was recently sold at Christie's sale-room for 670 guineas, under the title of 'Bayswater in 1814.' At the foot of some trees, on the top of a low hill, a boy standing between a donkey and a white dog talks to a girl, who is seated with a child on her lap ; other children sit near ; below them is a pool, and trees and buildings beyond. A wooded slope rises in the distance. The size of the picture is 37 by 51 inches. It is very fine and deep in tone, with something

Poussin-like in quality, and is suggestive of a soft summer's day under a subdued light. This picture, although retouched in 1859, is a good specimen of Linnell's early manner, with his firm drawing and what have been called his 'Dutch' qualities.

CHAPTER VII.

Steady Effort and Progress—Avoidance of Over-Confidence—Portrait-Painting—Visit to Derbyshire—Exhibition of Welsh Pictures—Windsor Forest—Visit to the Isle of Wight—Portrait of Mr. Pritchard—‘A Fall of Timber’—The Society of Painters in Oil and Water-Colours—Leading Members—Oil Copal—Letters from David Cox.

THE next few years were years of steady endeavour and slow but sure progress. Our artist was working with extra zeal, not only with a view to lay by sufficient money to justify him in entering into the marriage state, but also, by conscientious application and study, to approach nearer and nearer to that ideal truth of art which he conceived should be the aim of all sincere workers. It would appear, at first sight, to be a rash step for a young man to engage himself to a woman when, as he tells us, he was at the time hardly able to keep himself. But the step was not really so rash as it looked. Everything goes to prove that John Linnell had his head set squarely upon his shoulders, and he knew perfectly well what he was about. His religious awakening had taught him a good many striking truths, and one was that it is good for a man to marry young, if he can

manage to support a wife. He believed that, with God's help, he could ; at all events, he intended to make the effort. He knew it would be an uphill fight, for at that time the prices paid for work such as he did were small. Still, he was not without the confidence which comes from a sincere faith. That faith, which was based on reason and the perception of truth, gave him an unwavering hope in the ultimate position of every honest and truthful effort. But, though never lacking in this source of assurance, he was not tempted into over-confidence, and so constantly took the greatest pains, thus avoiding the faults of hasty or ill-thought-out work.

Such a frame of mind will carry a man a long way, and it was these principles, thus early adopted, and so rigorously carried out, that enabled the artist to go so far. For many years it was necessary for him to turn his hand to many different kinds of work ; nor was he too proud to do it. As we have seen, he was not above earning a little by cleaning a picture. Or he would do drawing for an artist who was less gifted as a draughtsman than himself. Sometimes he would condescend to work on another man's picture, as he had done in 1814 for Pugin, and as he did later (in 1822) for Sir Thomas Lawrence.

For a long time the chief source of his income was portrait-painting. He did other work : he was always painting landscapes ; but sometimes they did not sell, and when they did the prices he got for them were low. Not that they were not worth

more ; that they were was proved in many cases by their subsequently fetching double, treble, and sometimes even ten times the price at which they were originally sold. But there is a fashion in these things, and Linnell had not yet got into the fashion. However, he was not without his encouragements. Discerning friends perceived his undoubted gifts, and bade him work on and bide his time. His friend Mr. Tatham was one of these, and his confidence in the young artist gave him great encouragement.

Working thus in hope, with occasional short runs into the country, Linnell went on his way with a cheerful heart.

In 1814 occurred the visit to Derbyshire for Mr. Samuel Bagster, the publisher, already referred to. Mr. Bagster accompanied the artist to Beresford Hall. From that place Linnell visited the beautiful scenery of Dovedale and its neighbourhood, and made his drawings for the new edition (published in 1815) of Walton and Cotton's '*Angler*' ; for which he had in the previous year drawn the Cross at Tottenham and the Hertford subjects.

This year, his second as an exhibitor at Spring Gardens, Linnell was represented by seven pictures, four of which, if not more, were the result of his tour in Wales. They were : 'Evening—a View in Wales,' 'Morning : Crossing the River—a View in Wales,' 'Afternoon—Going to Milk,' 'Windmill,' 'Morning—Milking,' 'Travellers—a View in Wales,' and 'Snowdon, from Dolwyddelan—Evening.' The

last-named the artist always considered one of his best Welsh landscapes, and he repeated this subject, with slight variations, several times.

In the next year's exhibition at Spring Gardens, Derbyshire vied with Wales in supplying subjects for pictures. From Derbyshire there were two views in Dovedale; while the Principality gave the material for three landscapes: 'Mid-day—a Scene in Wales,' 'A Fine Evening after Rain—a Scene in Wales,' and 'The Haymakers' Repast—a Scene in Wales.' The second of these Welsh subjects was sold in the Exhibition to Mr. Tomkinson for twenty guineas. The artist painted a replica of this picture for the same gentleman in 1820, taking in exchange for it a forty-guinea pianoforte. A second replica (smaller) was subsequently executed for Mr. Harman for thirty guineas.

An exceptionally brilliant 'Fine Evening after Rain—North Wales' (dated 1836) was lent to the Old Masters Exhibition of 1883 by Mr. David Price. It is a panel, 15 by $22\frac{3}{4}$ inches, and represents a flock of sheep crossing a common, surrounded by hills. In the foreground there is a woman on a black pony, and a cow followed by a boy, with a dog and some sheep. Whether this was another replica of the same subject, I do not know. It is remarkable for its exquisite quality of sky and its pearly clouds; such depth and luminosity as it exhibits is a rare achievement. In Mr. Price's catalogue this picture is entitled 'Crossing the Common, Dolwyddelan.'

The remaining two pictures in this year's exhibi-

tion were ‘Barges on the Thames’ and ‘Fishing-Boats, Hastings.’

In May and June, 1815, occurred one of Linnell’s most noteworthy visits to the country. For four weeks during those months he went with his unmarried sister Elizabeth and Mary Palmer to Wingfield, near Windsor Forest. Here they spent



WINDSOR FOREST.

(From a water-colour study made in 1815.)

a month of rural peace and quiet, Linnell himself devoting his whole time to sketching. The studies he then made of the forest scenery, wood-cutting, etc., are amongst the best he ever did ; and as one looks at many of his subsequent woodland pictures, one cannot help being impressed with the fruitfulness of the diligent month spent in Windsor Forest.

All of the studies then made, carefully mounted

and dated, as he left them, are still in the possession of the family. They are most of them in water-colours or black and white chalk, although some few are in oil. They all show that faultless drawing for which Mr. Ruskin, in his '*Modern Painters*,' gives our artist such unstinting praise; they show also that transparency of atmosphere and that delicacy of colouring for which he was afterwards so noted. These drawings subsequently supplied the material for some of his best pictures.

Shortly after returning to London our artist went by invitation to Kingsclere and Newbury, where he painted a number of small portraits. Finishing in September, he proceeded thence to Southampton, and from there passed over the Solent to Lymington, in the Isle of Wight; where, peregrinating about the island (and he walked over half of it), he had a renewal of those impressions which he had experienced so profoundly in Wales. On the way from Newport to Niton, in particular, he was exceedingly delighted by a sudden view of the sea from the summit of the hill, and he leaves it on record how it recalled to his mind the passage in Xenophon's '*Retreat of the Ten Thousand*,' describing the delight of the Greeks when they beheld the sea. During this tour the solitude sometimes became extremely oppressive, and on one occasion he had to talk to himself aloud in order, by breaking the silence, to dispel the feeling of utter loneliness.

In the following year (1816) Linnell had no fewer than eleven pictures on the walls at Spring Gardens.



THOMAS PALMER.

(From an early oil-painting by J. Linnell.)

They included another Derbyshire landscape, and one from the Isle of Wight. The former is entitled ‘A View from a Hill, called Hanson Toot, in Derbyshire, looking into Dovedale’ (*vide* Walton’s ‘Complete Angler’). The Isle of Wight landscape is called ‘A View near Steep Hill, Isle of Wight.’ The other pictures comprise: ‘A View on the River Kennett, near Newbury, Berks,’ a result of his visit to Newbury, portrait-painting, the previous year; ‘A View in Windsor Forest,’ ‘Shipping,’ ‘Digging Potatoes,’ ‘Evening,’ and ‘Evening—Shepherds’ Amusement,’ one of his notable pictures. In addition to the above there were three portraits, one of which was a likenesss (painted in 1814) of Mr. Pritchard, the successor of Mr. John Martin in the pastorate of the Keppel Street Church.

Our artist was already beginning to be known for his excellent and life-like portraits, and this likeness—albeit not such a masterpiece as that of John Martin—attracted much attention and added greatly to his reputation. It is very dark, almost Rembrandtesque in treatment, but full of life and character. This picture was the means of bringing him many portrait commissions at this time. It was also engraved by the artist. Linnell now began to be very busy with portrait work, although he had as yet to be content with very moderate prices.

This year (1816) our artist enjoyed a week’s sojourn at Sevenoaks, Kent. He went in order to make studies of timber-felling for a picture. He had lodgings in the town, and spent most of his

time in the woods painting. His expenses for the week, as he records in his journal, amounted to twenty shillings. His principle of daily living in those days was frugality and hard work, and he carried it out very rigorously.

From the studies made at Sevenoaks, he (in 1817) painted a picture, 40 by 50 inches, called 'A Fall of Timber,' which was exhibited at Spring Gardens, and sold to Mr. Allnutt for fifty guineas. That gentleman afterwards (1846) sold it to Mr. Gibbons, of Regent's Park, for £250. It was exhibited in the British Gallery in 1825.

The other exhibits in Spring Gardens in 1817 were four portraits and two Isle of Wight views. This year Linnell acted as treasurer of the society. It had no permanent officials, the secretary, treasurer, etc., being elected afresh every year. This democratic management of the business of the society seemed greatly to please our artist, who wrote respecting it :

'We hired the rooms at Spring Gardens, we paid for everything at the close of the exhibition, and divided the surplus of receipts according to a percentage on the gross amount of works exhibited by each member. We had a president merely for order and business. He wore no chains or badge of any sort, and we had no titles, merely official distinctions, as secretary, treasurer, etc.; and we had no half-members, called "Associates," as the Water-Colour Society has had since, in imitation of the worst feature of the Royal Academy.'

The society went on in this way until 1820, when it reverted to the old constitution, and again became a water-colour society only. As it was facetiously put at the time, the oil floated out upon the water. Linnell, not being able any more to exhibit his oil pictures, went out with the other oil-painters.

Some of the most famous pictures that were ever exhibited under the auspices of this society were seen at Spring Gardens during the period that Linnell was a member. Haydon's celebrated 'Judgment of Solomon' was exhibited there one year (1814); while four years later his 'Listening to the Voice of the Angel of Death' appeared in the same exhibition.

Among the more prominent men who were then connected with the Society of Painters in Oil and Water-Colours were John Varley and his brother Cornelius, David Cox, Copley V. Fielding, William H. Hunt, A. Pugin, James Holmes, F. Mackenzie, H. Richter, T. Uwins, J. Cristall, W. Howell, L. Clennell, and J. Glover.* Many new members had joined when the constitution was altered so as to admit painters in oil. J. Glover was one of the new members. Some of his confrères must have regretted his admission; for Linnell puts it on record that Glover carried off most of the profits of the concern. The method pursued by the society

* Among those who left the society, when (in 1812) its bounds were enlarged to admit painters in oil, were De Wint, J. J. Chalon, W. S. Gilpin, J. A. Atkinson, W. Westall, F. Stevens, E. Dorrell, R. Hills, F. Nash, N. Pocock, R. R. Reinagle, etc., some of whom reappeared as 'exhibitors' in 1813.

was, at the close of the exhibition, after all expenses had been defrayed, to divide the profits amongst the members according to the prices they affixed to their pictures. By this plan Glover, who obtained large prices for that time, practically swamped all the others by taking the lion's share of the proceeds.

Notwithstanding this fact, Linnell was of opinion that some such method as that pursued by the Old Society of Painters in Oil and Water-Colours would be the one most conducive to the general interests of the whole body of artists, as by that means they would be the most likely, not only to have their pictures exhibited, but also to obtain what legitimate profits belonged to them.

Speaking of J. Glover, Linnell, in his autobiographical notes, records the fact that that artist first recommended him to try oil-copal varnish as a medium for oil-painting. He did so to his great satisfaction, and his example was soon followed by Mulready, William Collins, and others.

As already stated, Linnell was the treasurer of the Society of Painters in Oil and Water-Colours in 1817. The two following letters by David Cox, addressed to Linnell in his official capacity, have an interest quite apart from the minor matter of pounds, shillings, and pence to which they chiefly refer :

‘Hereford, July 21, 1817.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I have received yours of June 26, and should have answered by return of post, as you

requested, but was from home when it arrived on a sketching excursion. I am much pleased to hear the exertions of the society have this year been so successful. I will thank you to send me a five-pound note in a letter ; the small change can remain till I see you in London.

‘I am, dear sir,

‘Your obedient servant,

‘DAVID COX.

‘Direct “Drawing Master, Hereford.”’

‘Hereford, July 26, 1817.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I this day received your remittance of £5 on the society’s account. Accept my thanks for your kind attention. I have always the interest of the society at heart; and would have contributed to it this year if it had been possible ; but circumstances occurred which robbed me of my inclination. Next year I promise to exert myself.

‘I am, dear sir,

‘Your obedient servant,

‘DAVID COX.’

CHAPTER VIII.

Difficulties in the Way of Marriage—Opposed to ‘Clerical Interference’—Decides upon a Scottish Marriage—Carrying out his Views to their Logical Sequence—Departure for Scotland—Arrival in Edinburgh—Marriage—Visit to Glasgow—Loch Lomond—Return to Edinburgh and London—Commences Housekeeping.

IN 1817, having been so far prosperous, Linnell decided to defer his marriage no longer. He was now in his twenty-fifth year, and since his engagement to Mary Palmer he had managed to lay aside £500. With this amount safely invested, he felt that he was justified in taking the momentous step.

But all was not yet plain-sailing ; for our artist was a young man of ideas and of sturdy principles, and never acted rashly or without due thought. It is not intended to convey in this biography that he was always right ; but if a man’s principles may be judged by the success or failure which attend their application to life, we must grant that Linnell was not on the whole far wrong. Any way, such was his method—to apply the principles he had adopted as his rule of life, not only in regard to conduct, but in all his dealings, and thereby to test them. The religious views he had accepted referred him to the

Scriptures as the sole repository of the truths that are essential to man's well-being, as well here as hereafter ; and being, moreover, satisfied of their sufficiency, he did not flinch from making them the touchstone by which to judge the right from the wrong.

Thus following the guidance of his reason, he came to the conclusion that marriage is a civil rite, and in no wise an ecclesiastical one. A Dissenter of Dissenters, he was opposed to all priesthoods, whose influence he considered always usurping and tyrannous, and never for the real spiritual good of the people.

This being his matured conviction on the subject of marriage, he resolved to submit to no clerical assistance or authority whatever in regard to that rite. This decision landed him in something of a dilemma ; for, on the one hand, it was not clear how he was going to get over the difficulty, while, on the other, some of his religious friends manifested strong opposition, and even began to hint that his objection to being married by a clergyman was a mere pretext to break off his engagement. Fortunately, those who knew the artist best, and especially Mr. Palmer and his daughter, had no such doubt as to his motives.

Finally, after making diligent inquiry on every hand, he decided that the only way to overcome his difficulties was to go to Scotland, and be married by the simple civil rite which obtains, and is perfectly legal, there.

Writing of this subject in his autobiography, he says : ‘ My determination to be married there in order to avoid the degrading and, as I consider it, blasphemous character of the Church ceremony, was the chief thing which had stayed my marriage so long, for at that time the journey to Scotland was the only escape from the clerical imposition, and I have some conviction that my testimony helped to procure the present deliverance from that remnant of priestly usurpation. At the time when I first became convinced that such a step was necessary to satisfy my conscience in the matter, I did not see where the means would come from to defray the expense. . . . When the time arrived, however, I was able to take £50 from my funded property for my journey.’

Some of those persons who had watched Linnell’s perplexities doubtless thought he was carrying his obedience to principle a little too far. He, on his part, could not understand the frame of mind of those who, in this as in other matters, held by a certain doctrine, but were unwilling to follow it out to its logical conclusion. There was no such hesitancy on his part. Hence he sturdily went to Scotland to be married as a protest against priestly usurpation in any and every form.

These are in substance Linnell’s own words. He adds : ‘ This was the second instance in which I had carried out to their proper logical sequence the principles of those who had taught me, but who had not the courage to follow my example.’



MRS. LINNELL, *NÉE* PALMER.

(From a miniature in oil by J. Linnell, 1818-20.)

The first instance here alluded to was his baptism by immersion ; for on joining the Keppel Street community, he at once acquiesced to ‘being immersed in the name of Christ Jesus.’

The reference to those ‘who had not the courage to follow my example’ is a gird at Cornelius Varley, who was the person who in the first instance induced him to go to the Keppel Street Baptist Church, and who appears not to have had the courage to follow out the principles he had espoused. At least, such was Linnell’s view ; for Cornelius Varley was not baptized ; nor did he become a regular member of the church.

Before going to Scotland, Linnell made particular inquiries respecting the legality of a marriage contracted in the way he was about to adopt, and, among others, he applied to a Dr. Waugh, a Scotch Dissenting clergyman, for information. The worthy gentleman assured him that such a marriage was perfectly legal and binding ; ‘but,’ he added, in a manner and tone of great severity, ‘I’ll tell you what, young maan : if ye were a member of my church I’d cut ye aff !’

This little bit of feeling on the part of the parson, it needly hardly be said, convinced the artist more than ever that the clerical idea, whether in Church or Dissent, was radically wrong.

On Monday, September 15, 1817, therefore, John Linnell and his affianced bride set forth on their journey to Scotland. It speaks well for the confidence Mr. Palmer had in the character of his future

son-in-law that he allowed his daughter to accompany him alone on such an errand. But Mr. Palmer had been acquainted with the young man intimately for five or six years, and knew the sterling stuff of which he was made.

They travelled on the top of the coach to Manchester, where they arrived on Tuesday evening. On Wednesday morning they continued their journey, going by way of Lancaster to Kendal, and thence on Thursday morning to Keswick, where they rested for the remainder of the day. Here Linnell made a sketch in water-colours of Derwent-water, with the hill beyond. From this study he (in 1868) painted his picture called '*The Emigrants*.' From Keswick, on Friday morning, the travellers went on to Carlisle in a gig, proceeding thence on the following day by mail-coach to Edinburgh, where they arrived at six in the morning of Sunday, September 21.

Linnell had letters of introduction from Mr. Robson, the water-colour painter, and member of the Society of Painters in Oil and Water-Colours, to Mr. David Lizars, the engraver and publisher of Edinburgh, with whom he subsequently had some dealings. After visiting several other friends on Sunday and Monday, the travellers called upon Mr. Lizars, who received them with great kindness and cordiality, and by whose aid our artist obtained from the public library the loan of Erskine's '*Institutes*,' which enabled him to satisfy himself beyond all doubt that the form of marriage he wished to adopt,

'namely, by magistrate, without any priestly interference,' was 'thoroughly legal.'

Even at this point some of his Scotch Nonconformist friends pressed him to adopt their semi-clerical plan of marriage ; but he replied that he 'had come all the way from London to testify against the usurpation of a civil act by clergy of any sort,' and he would in no way bend from his purpose. Accordingly, on September 24, the marriage took place, in the presence of Mr. James Gibson, a magistrate of Edinburgh, and Mr. Lizars. The *fiancés* simply made a declaration that henceforth they would hold themselves bound together as man and wife ; the magistrate signed the marriage certificate, and there was an end.*

In this action in respect to his marriage, Linnell stands out in a most distinct manner from other men around him. Taking his beliefs direct from the Scriptures, and being sincere in his desire to live according to those beliefs, he could see no other way of acting in regard to his marriage except as he did. In this he manifested that striking individuality which characterized him throughout the whole of his life, but which was never more splendidly exemplified than in this act of self-restraint and ultimate triumph. For when he first engaged himself to Mary Palmer,

* In a 'Life of Richard Redgrave,' published since the above was written, the curious mistake is made of saying that John Linnell was married at Gretna Green. Redgrave, who is credited with the statement, must have got his friend George Richmond mixed up in his memory with Linnell, the former having, as has been shown, gone with his bride to Gretna.

he might have married as other young men do, and taken his chances of being able to keep his wife and family (if such he should have); but, being resolute in his determination not to accept the intervention of the clergy, he was obliged to wait until a way was opened out to him. The waiting was of several years' duration, but by hard work and perseverance he gained the victory, saving enough money in that time not only to pay for the matrimonial trip to Scotland, but also to start housekeeping with a handsome nest-egg in the funds.

The views he then held in regard to marriage Linnell never relinquished; and when, in after-years, his son James came to be married, he insisted upon the rite being performed before the civil authority (which by that time had become legal in England), and though the father of the bride was opposed to it, he gained his point.

In this respect he acted upon the same principles as those which guided him in his painting. He went for his perceptions and knowledge of truth direct to Nature, aided by the works of the Old Masters, without being deterred by the opinions of those around him, or by modern art practice.

From Edinburgh the newly-married pair went, on September 25, to Glasgow, where they spent the next few days. While here Linnell painted portraits in water-colours of Mr. and Mrs. Cochrane. The Mr. Cochrane here referred to was the father of Mr. J. Cochrane, of the firm of Ogle, Duncan, and Cochrane, booksellers, Holborn, for whom

Linnell had previously (1815) executed various commissions, taking books in part payment.

The portraits were finished on the 29th, and on the 30th the artist and his wife set out on a trip to Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine. They went first by steamboat to Arrochar, thence, accompanied by Captain McLachlin and Mr. J. Allan (one of the friends he had met in Edinburgh), proceeding to Tarbet, and from there, by steamboat again, to Inversnaid, and so over Loch Lomond. They endeavoured to reach Mr. Stewart's inn on Loch Katrine, but failed to do so, and were obliged to make their way back to Inversnaid, nearly losing their way in their attempt to find the Garrison Inn, near Rob Roy's Cave.

Linnell made a few sketches of the lakes and mountains; but he does not appear to have been so deeply impressed with the scenery of Scotland as he had been some years before with the qualities of the landscape in Wales. Possibly he did not enjoy the necessary calm and quiet. On the morning of October 1 (he records) he rose early and made a drawing of the mountains before breakfast. Later, he and Mrs. Linnell sailed down Loch Lomond to Luss, proceeding thence to Helensburgh and Glasgow.

On October 6 he paid a visit to Kilbarchin, near Paisley, with Mr. Cochrane to see his mother, aged ninety, of whom he also painted a portrait. Whilst at Glasgow he went twice, as he records, to hear Dr. Chalmers preach.

On the 7th the travellers returned to Edinburgh, when they again visited Mr. Lizars. On the 8th they turned their faces southward, proceeding by coach to Newcastle. Here Linnell visited his old friend William, otherwise 'Billy,' Dixon, who was then living at Newcastle, painting portraits. By Dixon he was introduced to T. M. Richardson, the artist. From Newcastle the southward journey was continued to Durham, and thence, after visiting the cathedral, *via* Leeds, to London.

'Such,' remarks Linnell in his notes on this trip to Scotland—'such was our prosperous journey to the North.' He goes on to say that neither he nor his wife ever visited Scotland again. Both, however, cherished the recollection of the kind friendship they experienced from Mr. Lizars and his family. He subsequently put it on record, too, that the uniform courtesy and kindness they received at the hands of all those whom they met in Scotland gave him and Mrs. Linnell a very high opinion of the Scottish people, and that opinion was afterwards confirmed by the great kindness of a Scotchwoman whom he knew later in London, and who proved to be one of his best friends—Lady Torrens.

This trip to the North lasted just a month, the travellers having set out on September 15 and arriving in London again on October 15. When he started Linnell put £50 in his pocket. He spent £60 15s. while away; but £15 of the amount, as he makes note, was for linen and woollen goods, bought at Glasgow, with which to begin housekeeping.

On their return to London the couple separated for a few days, going to their respective parents' houses until such time as Linnell could secure and prepare a suitable place of abode. He took the first floor and an upper room at No. 35, Rathbone Place, Oxford Street, at a rent of £60 a year, and by October 27 the necessary furniture, etc., had been bought and housekeeping commenced.

On November 4 he began a picture of Mrs. Freeman, and on the 10th he had commenced an evening academy, with Masters Lowry (son of the engraver) and Albert Varley (son of John Varley) as pupils. This month also he was working on two pictures for Mr. Vines, 'A View near Shanklin' and 'Windsor Forest'; and in December he executed an etching from a drawing by Robson, and made sketches for his picture of 'St. John preaching in the Wilderness,' 'The Flight into Egypt,' etc. The 'St. John preaching' was exhibited at Spring Gardens the same year; but, although greatly admired, it did not sell. 'The Flight into Egypt' was not finally completed until 1841, when it was exhibited in the British Gallery.

At Lady Day, 1818, Linnell rented an additional floor at Rathbone Place, his tenancy continuing until Christmas, at £64 per annum.

CHAPTER IX.

Increase of Portrait Commissions—Low Prices—Lady Torrens—A Love Romance—Miniature-painting—James Holmes—Anecdote of Beau Brummell—Holmes and Linnell—‘The Widows’ Club—Aristocratic Commissions — Paints Princess Sophia — Visit to Southampton—Read—Misrepresentations—Read and Constable —At Windsor Castle.

THE year 1818 was a tolerably prosperous one. Linnell was now becoming known as a clever and conscientious portrait-painter, and commissions, such as they were, were not far to seek. It was chiefly mere bread-and-butter work, and for the most part but ill-paid. The artist at this time thought himself fortunate to get £10 for a portrait ; he even did chalk portraits as low as £3. Excellent as his work in that line was, he had for a long time to be content with very moderate prices, and thought himself well paid if he received 20 guineas for a portrait, as he did for a specially fine one, painted about this time (1817), of the Countess of Errol. To this period also belongs a small drawing of Rowland Hill (begun in February, 1817), which he subsequently engraved, and his portrait of the Duke of Argyll. The latter is an excellent likeness, and exhibits some of the painter’s best qualities — excellent

draughtsmanship, a masculine style of treatment, combined with solidity and power in colouring. But for the finest specimens of his work we must look to such portraits as those of John Martin, Thomas Palmer, Dr. Jenkins, Edward Sterling, William Coningham (afterwards Member of Parliament for Brighton), Thomas Carlyle, Mulready, Malthus, Archbishop Whateley, the Bishop of Chichester, Samuel Rogers, Lady Torrens and family, etc. Some of these, however, were executed at a much later period. The group of Lady Torrens and family belongs to 1819. It was exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1821, and is one of the artist's best pictures of the kind.

Several of the Torrens family he painted again—Miss Torrens more than once ; also the eldest son, Henry, when he was about to go out to India. Our artist received many commissions through this excellent family, and altogether his connection with it was very fortunate. Indeed, he used to say that Lady Torrens was the best friend he ever found in her sphere of life. His acquaintance with this admirable lady came through Colonel Dumaresque, who took lessons from John Varley, and so came to know Linnell. In 1818 he painted the portraits of Colonel Dumaresque and his sister, the wife of General Darling, who was going as Governor to the Isle of France. He met Lady Torrens for the first time at one of these sittings, and soon after was employed by Sir Henry, who lived near the Bishop's palace at Fulham.

Linnell always had the greatest admiration for Lady Torrens, whom he regarded as a model both as a wife and a mother. In his autobiography he has much to say about her and her husband, and records a romantic incident touching their first acquaintance. Sir Henry, who had been severely wounded in India, stopped on his way home at St. Helena, where Lady Torrens then lived with her father, Sir George Paton, who was Governor of the island. His life was almost despaired of, because the wounds from which he was suffering would not heal. There was poisonous matter in them, and no one knew how to help him. The Governor's daughter, however, came to the rescue, leeched the wounds of the dying Knight, and so restored him to health. But, says the recorder of the incident, in curing him of one wound she inflicted the 'deeper wound of love.' They were married, and a noble pair they proved. They had six children, to whom Lady Torrens seems to have devoted herself body and soul, paying the greatest attention to their training and education. But they all, or nearly all, died early in life. The eldest son, a miniature portrait of whom on ivory Linnell painted before he went to India, never returned, having met with his death in that country. The other sons also became soldiers and died young. Writing in 1863, Linnell writes: 'Now there is only one daughter left, Lady Anstruther, if even she is left. All that beautiful family gone!' He adds: 'Lady Torrens would gladly have seen her sons otherwise employed than

in the army ; but the ambition of the father ruled. If he had followed the advice of his wife the family would have been otherwise disposed.'

The mention above of the miniature on ivory calls for a few words on this subject. Linnell commenced his first work of this kind in 1818, the subject of it being his own wife. Portraiture on ivory was suggested to him by James Holmes, the miniature and figure painter, who was now his near neighbour : Linnell having, at the end of 1818, removed from Rathbone Place, where his first child, Hannah (afterwards the wife of Mr. Samuel Palmer), was born, to No. 6, Cirencester Place, at the upper end of Titchfield Street, where, encouraged by his steadily increasing business, he had taken a house at £60 a year.

This James Holmes was a notable man in his day. Born in 1777, he served his apprenticeship under Meadows, the well-known engraver, but was no sooner out of his time than he relinquished the graver for water-colour drawing. In conjunction with the Varleys, Cristall, Heaply, and others, he was one of the early members of the old Society of Painters in Water-Colours, in one of the exhibitions of which was exhibited his well-known work, 'The Doubtful Shilling,' which was purchased by the famous Beau Brummell, who had a nice taste in art, and was, indeed, a very proficient amateur, some of his miniatures being accounted excellent in style and finish.

Through their congeniality of taste in regard to matters artistic a warm friendship sprang up be-

tween Holmes and the ‘Beau.’ On one occasion the former called upon his fashionable friend at three o’clock in the afternoon and found him at breakfast. The painter could not help expressing his surprise, and remarked that he had positively dined.

‘Dear me! dear me!’ replied the man of fashion.
‘Why, this is my break of day.’

On another occasion Brummell gave the artist a similar surprise. He had done some work for him, and called one day for the amount of his bill.

‘I suppose,’ said Brummell, ‘that you would call yours a debt of honour?’

Holmes said he would.

‘Then I must pay you. I always pay my debts of honour,’ returned the dandy.

He accordingly wrote out a cheque for the amount, and remarked as he handed it to the artist :

‘I would advise you to present it without delay,’ which he accordingly did.

The only portrait extant of Brummell was painted by James Holmes. The taste and beauty of colouring displayed in his miniatures soon gained for the latter a large share of the patronage of London, his likenesses being, as Lord Byron remarked, ‘inveterate.’ His portrait of the noble poet himself, painted in 1815, was preferred by him to any other.*

* The following letter is in the possession of the painter’s sons, themselves artists :

‘Genoa, May 19, 1823.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I will thank you very much to present to, or otherwise obtain for the bearer, a print from the miniature you drew of me in

Mr. Holmes enjoyed the patronage of George IV. and his Court, where for a time he was ‘the King’s hobby,’ partly on account of his gifts as an artist, and partly by reason of his exceptional musical gifts, he being a capital flautist. Having with other ‘oil-men’ (for he afterwards began to work in this medium) resigned his membership of the Water-Colour Society, Holmes became one of the founders of the Society of British Artists, which held its first exhibition in 1823. For thirty years he was a supporter of this institution, and a constant contributor to its exhibitions, where his portraits and subject-pictures won him many friends and patrons, among the number being Sir Henry Meux, whose mansion at Theobalds was decorated by his pencil. The greater portion of his later years was spent in the county of Salop, where (in 1860) he serenely passed away in the eighty-third year of his age. So happy and cheerful was his disposition that Mr. Walpole (Lord Derby’s Home Secretary) once remarked, speaking of the weather, ‘Ah, Mr. Holmes, it is always fine weather with you.’

A striking anecdote, showing the characters of the two men, is related of Holmes and Linnell. The former, in the heyday of his prosperity, was in the receipt of an income of about £2,000 a year, but he saved nothing.

1815. I prefer that likeness to any which has been drawn of me by any artist whatever. My sister, Mrs. Leigh, or the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird, will pay you the price of the engraving.

‘To — Holmes, Esq.’

‘Ever yours,

‘NOEL BYRON.

'Why don't you save something?' asked Linnell.

'You can't save on two thousand a year!' was the reply.

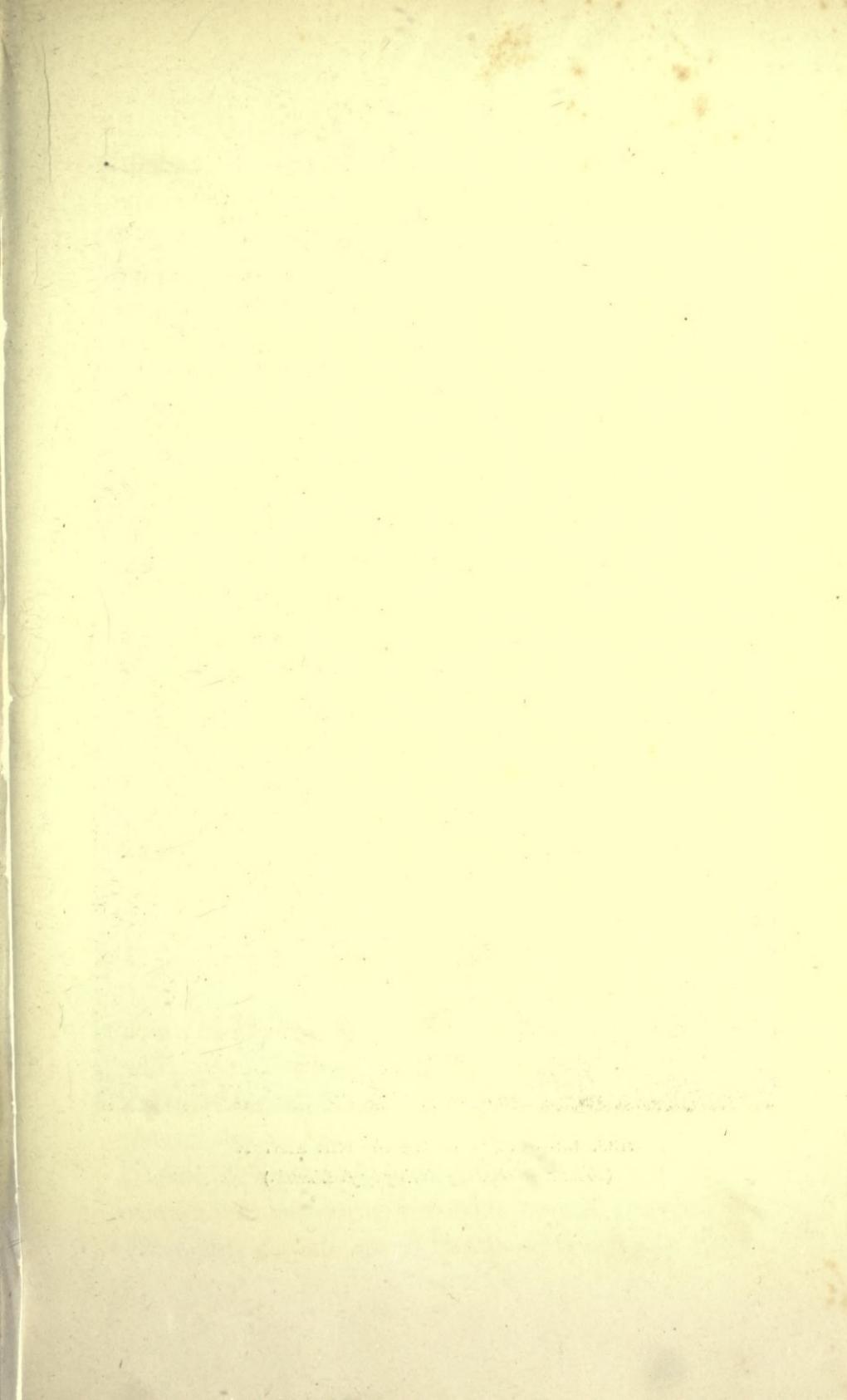
'I would save something, whatever my income was,' responded the younger artist.

'What! If it were but twenty pounds a year?' cried Holmes.

'Yes,' replied Linnell; 'if my income were but twenty pounds I would save a shilling.'

Holmes was very successful as a Court painter, and executed miniature portraits of a large number of the *entourage* of the King. Indeed, at one time he appears to have been so busy that he became independent; and having received a commission from the Queen of Portugal to paint seven miniatures of her, he stopped when he had done three or four, and refused to do any more because she was so ugly. He painted many portraits of Princess Esterhazy, the cousin of George IV. He used to say that he appeared to be always painting her; and when the portraits were done, he was always calling upon her for the money. His best miniatures were in water-colours; when he afterwards did them in oils he was not so successful.

Holmes was member of a Bohemian club which was of the old-fashioned sort. It was called 'The Widows,' and was held in a tavern in St. Martin's Lane. Amongst others who belonged to it were Edmund Kean; Stanfield (afterwards the R.A.); Roberts, the artist; Nugent, a writer for the *Times*; an actor named Hawkins, better known as 'Jerry'





MRS. LINNELL, MOTHER OF THE ARTIST.

(From a miniature painting by J. Linnell.)

Sneak,' because of the admirable way in which he took that character ; and an animal-painter named Turner. The latter had a wooden leg, and Holmes used to relate with great enjoyment how on one occasion, when Turner had fallen asleep in his arm-chair, one of the wits lifted up his wooden leg, and put the end of it in the fire, whereupon the artist suddenly woke up, saying that he felt his toes burning. Some of the best wits of the time belonged to 'The Widows,' and Holmes was one of the liveliest and most genial of the lot.

To this man Linnell was indebted for the first suggestion in regard to miniature-painting on ivory, and from him he received some valuable hints as to methods of working, etc. In recognition of his obligations to his friend in this matter, Linnell one day gave him a couple of small landscapes, highly finished and very rich in colour, which Holmes valued very highly, and kept constantly on the mantelpiece of his studio, but which on the break-up of his establishment became unaccountably lost.

The miniature of Mrs. Linnell surprised many, alike by its richness of colour and its delicacy of manipulation. It was shown by John Varley to the Marchioness of Stafford, who was considered an authority on such matters. She pronounced it superior to anything of the sort she had seen, and the only thing on ivory like the Old Masters. This favourable judgment caused the artist to have a run of commissions for portraits from her connections. First he painted one of her daughters, Lady Eliza-

beth, who had just then been married to Lord Belgrave, and lived in Park Lane. Then followed miniatures of her brother, Lord Francis Leveson-Gower, afterwards Lord Ellesmere, Lord and Lady Ebrington, Lady Francis Stanhope, and others.

These aristocratic commissions followed so quickly one upon another that at one time the democratic John Linnell appears to have had an idea that he might be drawn into the circle of Court portrait-painters. In 1821 he was commissioned to execute a portrait of the Princess Sophia Matilda, the sister of George IV., for the Duke of York ; and in the following year he painted a second miniature of this Princess. Referring to these portraits, he writes :

‘I ventured to make my pictures to look really like them, though as favourable as truth would admit ; and I calculate it was on that account I had no more from that connection. I asked Lady Torrens at the time what would be the consequence in her opinion if, in the event of my being employed to paint George IV., the King, I made a faithful likeness.

“It would be your ruin,” she said.

“I cannot help it,” I replied. “So I shall do if I get the commission.”

‘Which I did not. And a good thing for me, too, that I did not,’ he adds.

In 1818 one of his contributions to the Spring Gardens Gallery was the noble picture already mentioned, ‘St. John preaching in the Wilderness,’ a

work which exhibited a remarkable advance in the development of his genius. In the following year Linnell had eleven pictures at Spring Gardens. He was one of the hangers that year, and so, as he says, ‘had a better chance of fair places.’ None of his canvases were very large, nor very small. Among the number were ‘Windsor Forest’ and a ‘Wind-mill.’ In 1820 he sent ‘The Shepherds’ Amusement.’ The latter was a sunset, with a young shepherd piping, and others sitting round—a most poetic picture. It was afterwards purchased by Mr. Gibbons, of Regent’s Park.

In July, 1819, the artist again paid a visit to Mr. Wykham, of Tythorp, to paint portraits, remaining for three days. After his return, towards the end of August, he accepted an invitation to visit an artist friend at Southampton. This was Mr. D. C. Read, an engraver by profession, whose acquaintance Linnell had previously made through Mr. White, the print-seller, of Brownlow Street, Holborn, for whom Read then worked. Having some taste and ability, he was anxious to become a painter, and our artist had given him some instructions:

On arriving at his friend’s, with his wife and their little daughter, he found Read’s position very different to what he had represented it to be. The accommodation at his disposal was very scant, and his guests were not over-comfortable ; but they took their host’s shortcomings in good part, and put the best face on matters.

While at Southampton, Linnell painted a picture in oil of Netley Abbey, spending ten or twelve days upon it. He used to leave his canvas overnight at a farm in the neighbourhood, and walked to and fro morning and evening, a distance of four miles, sometimes carrying his little daughter on his shoulder most of the way.

At Southampton he made a number of useful acquaintances. He was visited there by Mr. Chambers Hall, for whom he afterwards did a considerable amount of work. He painted for the Rev. Thomas Allies a life-size portrait of his wife, in exchange for which he received two oil-paintings—one by Poussin (of which he made Mr. Allies a copy), and another by Everdingen—from Mr. Allies' collection. Both of them are still in the possession of the family. Of the copy of the Poussin, Mr. Allies afterwards wrote that it was greatly admired, and that some of his friends who were good judges took it for the original.

On the whole, Linnell had a successful time at Southampton. The visit proved equally advantageous to Read, for whom Linnell obtained a situation as drawing-master at Salisbury, where his position was greatly improved. He also recompensed him in other ways for the trouble and expense to which he had been put by this visit.

It is necessary to give these details, because Read subsequently misrepresented Linnell to Constable, and thereby did him an unintentional injury. The fact is, Read's ambition to become a painter appears

to have led him to expect more aid and assistance from his artist friends than they were able to give him. Linnell helped him all he could, as did Constable likewise ; but they could not make a successful painter of him if it was not in him. Constable appears to have taken considerable trouble on his account, and to have received and sent his pictures to the Academy from his own house. But Read was not satisfied. He complained to Linnell that Constable had not also taken the trouble to return them to him when rejected. In short, he had become a disappointed and soured man, and afterwards, in similar grumblings to Constable about Linnell, gave the former the means of saying some disparaging things about his friend. But of these matters more will have to be said farther on.

A joke was current at the time anent these pictures of Read's, which Constable found so good that he was fond of repeating it, even though somewhat against himself. They were on one occasion, possibly when being unpacked, standing outside Constable's house. Someone who saw them there said they made quite a show, while they were taken by others who stopped to look at them to be Constable's. Others said they were better than his, and that Read had 'outrun the Constable.'

But we have not yet done with the years 1818 and 1819. In the former year Linnell did an etching of 'Sheep Lying Down.' The 'Windsor Forest' picture was begun this year, as was likewise the landscape 'Evening—Storm clearing off.'

These two paintings, and the ‘St. John preaching in the Wilderness,’ painted this year, are all among his greater, if not most famous, efforts, and show that he was already finding his way towards that grander style and broader treatment that afterwards characterized him.

In the August of this year (1818) he obtained permission, through Sir Benjamin West, to copy a picture by Holbein at Windsor Castle, said to be a portrait of Luther. The copy he made is still in the possession of the family at Redhill; but though the painting is a very fine one, it is indubitably not a portrait of Luther.

He took a lodging at Windsor while engaged on the picture, and being entrusted with a key to let himself in, he used to go to the castle very early in the morning, in order to make the most of his time.

When first shown into the room where the portrait was hung, he was cautioned to make as little noise as possible, because the insane old King, George III., was in the room below with his keepers! Thus he worked away at the picture, leaving off every now and again to look forth from the windows and feast his eyes upon the enchanting scene of woodland and meadow, sky and stream, that lay before him, but thinking all the while of the poor old monarch below. No wonder that he felt the place sad and gloomy, and was glad when his self-imposed task was done and he could get once more into the freer air of unkingly men.

CHAPTER X.

Resigns his Membership of the Society of Painters in Oil and Water-Colours—A Bit of Criticism—Sets Down his Name as Candidate for the A.R.A.—Independence—Mulready's Advice—Constable and Linnell—Read's Misrepresentations—Collins acts a Friendly Part—Probable Cause of Constable's Hostility—Constable and Collins—Letters from Constable.

As we have seen, Linnell exhibited in the Academy from 1807 until 1811, and then not again until 1821. During the intervening years he had been a prolific exhibitor at the Society of Painters in Oil and Water-Colours, and an occasional exhibitor at the British Institution, and seemed satisfied with the publicity he thus obtained. In 1820, however, the former body went back to its old style and title, and Linnell resigned his membership. After seven years' experience it was found that oil and water did not commingle harmoniously together, and a separation took place, Linnell, as a worker chiefly in oil, going out with the men of that medium.

Referring, in his autobiography, to some of the men whom he had known in connection with the old Water-Colour Society and the Society of Painters in Oil and Water-Colours, and their gifts as artists, Linnell has the following weighty criticism :

'When Cristall, however, took a subject from Nature, he showed considerable power of design and expression (witness his "Fishermen on the Look-out at Hastings"). But he had no power of finish in realization of details, and the only water-colour painters who then manifested such a power were the miniature and flower painters, in whose works the quality of finish, being produced not to carry out and enhance fine design, became a very second-rate quality. Except in a few instances in water-colours, nothing like what William Hunt has since produced was to be seen then, and still less what Mulready has done in oil. Miniature portraits at that time had in general nothing in them beyond the locket-and-brooch style—jeweller's work—with no pretensions to fine art. It seemed never to have occurred then to any painter of such things that all which Reynolds had done on a large scale in oil could be done on a small one in any material.'

This bit of criticism on the art of his contemporaries, although referring more particularly to a somewhat earlier period, gives us an index as to what were Linnell's aims at this time.

His contributions to the Somerset House Exhibition in 1821 were "The Windmill," two cabinet-sized portraits (Colonel Maxwell and Mrs. Brooks), and the portrait group of Lady Torrens and her children (5 feet in length), already referred to, one of the best groups, in the painter's opinion, he ever did. This was the first time that the artist had exhibited portraits at the Academy, and they

continued to be his chief subjects for many years to come.

In his autobiographical notes Linnell writes : 'This year I finished my *Torrens* group, and sent it to the Royal Academy . . . and set down my name in the list as candidate for the A.R.A.' His friend Mulready had already become a full-fledged Academician (A.R.A. 1815, R.A. 1816); Collins, another of his fellow-students, had been made R.A. the previous year; while Constable was groaning under the demi-semi honour of Associateship only. Mulready, ranking Linnell as inferior to none of them, urged him to set down his name. He was not elected, however, although, according to what he was told by Mulready, only one or two votes intervened betwixt him and the coveted distinction. After this, according to his own statement, he never followed up very eagerly the endeavour to be elected. 'I was told,' he writes, 'what I now believe to be true, that unless certain electioneering and servile ways were resorted to there was no chance for me. Then I said, "Let it go ; I shall not ask for a vote, nor do anything but paint as well as I can."'

So independent a young man could, perhaps, hardly expect to be elected to so august a body as the Royal Academy, in which everything is conducted on the courtier-like plan.

Many years afterwards the artist told one of his sons that Mulready had once given him a hint that it would be better for him and for his chances of preferment if he made himself a little more of the

courtier, and paid more attention to his dress, general appearance, etc. Then, pointing to a spot of mud upon his cloak, he said, ‘That is what stood in the way of your election more than anything else.’ But whether the remark was made in connection with Linnell’s failure to be elected in 1821, or to a later period, is not clear. Perhaps Mulready overstrained the point. One can hardly think that all the Academicians had their eyes upon that spot of mud on his cloak.

It would be more understandable if the remark referred to a later period of life; for although the Puritan democrat had already begun to show himself in Linnell as early even as 1821, he had not yet manifested that contempt for fine clothes, show, fashion, etc., which characterized him in his later days. There had been a time, and that not many years before, when he was something of a dandy, affecting fine clothes, fashionable boots, and the ‘correct’ thing in cravats and hats. And even when that green-salad period had passed, visiting as he frequently was at the houses of aristocratic and well-to-do people to paint portraits, and to meet others round the social board, he was obliged to dress carefully and well. But there came a time when, looking more within, and thinking less and less of merely external things, he came to give comparatively little thought to dress. Then, it may be, Mulready’s criticism was to the point.

But it is evident that our artist did not think that anything of this kind had much to do with his non-

election so early as 1821. He attributed his failure to be elected to a far different cause. Referring to that matter, he writes : 'When the election time came, then began the endeavours of Constable to prevent my election ; for I was told it was owing to his exertions that I was not elected, as I was told by Mulready that I was nearly chosen.'

That there was some ground for Linnell's belief that his friend was largely accountable for his non-election is, unfortunately, too true. Reference has already been made to the artist Read, to whom Linnell paid a visit in Southampton, in 1819, and for whom he obtained a situation as art-master at Salisbury ; also to Read's acquaintance with Constable, and the latter's efforts to get his pictures hung. Mention has likewise been made of the portrait painted for Mr. Allies, and the Gaspard Poussin and Everdingen received in exchange for the portrait and a copy of the Poussin. At the time, and, according to letters subsequently received from him, for some time afterwards, Mr. Allies appears to have been perfectly satisfied with the transaction, while Linnell, on his part, undoubtedly thought he had not made a bad bargain. Subsequently, however, Mr. Allies imagined that he had been sharply dealt with, having possibly come to regard the pictures that he had parted with as more valuable than he had thought when they were his own. Anyway, he seems to have complained to Read of sharp practice on Linnell's part, and Read had nothing better to do than to report the transaction to Constable. At the

same time he complained of the price Linnell had charged him for a view of Southampton Quay which he had commissioned him to paint, and for which he was required to pay £15.

Whatever ground there might have been for the accusation against Linnell, it was undoubtedly Constable's duty either to take no notice of the charge, and say nothing about it, or else thoroughly to investigate it. Unfortunately, he did neither the one nor the other, but went about amongst members of the Academy and retailed the stories Read had communicated to him. That they were calculated to injure Linnell as a candidate there can be no doubt, and that they did he always firmly believed.

When Linnell first heard of these calumnies, which was not until 1823, he immediately took steps to have them contradicted, and to set the transaction upon which they were based in its true light. For this purpose he called upon William Collins, R.A., and placing the matter before him, asked for his friendly offices to aid him in setting himself right with his brother artists. Collins, in the kindly spirit for which he was noted, at once gave the counsel and assistance desired.

Collins went carefully over all the letters, receipts, etc., relating to the affair, and satisfied himself that the accusations were baseless, and that a great injustice had been done to his friend. Linnell's own words in his autobiography are :

'Collins stood my friend in this matter, and when I had shown him the receipts and letters relating

thereto, he went with me to Constable and represented to him the falsehood of all that he had propagated against me, demanding from Constable a written acknowledgment of the same.'

Constable, however, refused to meet his friends in this respect, although, after hearing what Collins had to say, and examining the letters and receipts in his and Linnell's presence, he professed himself satisfied with these proofs of the latter's innocence of the calumny which he had been the means of circulating against him. He promised, however, to contradict verbally the statements he had made.

Then, at Collins' suggestion, Linnell drew up a document, stating what Constable had admitted, and what he had promised to do, which Collins signed in Constable's presence.

The document, which is still in existence, is to the following effect: That, at a meeting between Messrs. Collins, Constable, and John Linnell, at Mr. Constable's house (at Hampstead), Mr. Constable expressed his conviction that by the documents written by Mr. Read, together with the entries made in John Linnell's journal at the time, John Linnell had confuted the charge Mr. Read made against him of illiberality in charging Mr. Read for a painting of Southampton, and also that John Linnell had confuted Mr. Read's assertions respecting the transaction between the Rev. Thomas Allies and himself, by two letters from Mr. Allies to John Linnell soon after; hereby proving the falsehood of the representation made by Mr. Read to Mr. Constable.

concerning John Linnell's conduct at Southampton in September, 1819 ; Mr. Constable, in consequence of this conviction, promised to explain to Mr. Shorts, at Mr. Reynolds', Bayswater, and to W. R. Bigg, Esq., R.A., and to contradict wherever he recollects to have reported those statements. This took place in the presence of W. Collins, Esq., R.A., March 22, 1823.

Beneath this document there appears, in Collins' handwriting :

'The above statement is perfectly correct.—William Collins.'

Collins asked Constable to sign the document, to which he had put his own name, but Constable refused to do so, at the same time repeating that he would do all in his power to undo the mischief he had occasioned by the statements he had so injuriously set afloat.

Linnell was perforce obliged to be content with Constable's undertaking, and so the matter, for the time being, dropped. Subsequently, however, he had reason to believe that Constable never took any trouble to contradict the statements that he had been the means of spreading abroad, or did so in such a lukewarm manner that his vindication was worse than useless. Constable may have done all that he thought was necessary; nevertheless, the fact remains that Linnell continued to suffer from the calumny the latter had set afloat, which could hardly have been the case if the same means had been adopted to contradict it which were taken to spread it abroad.

It is anything but a pleasing duty to have to go into matters of this kind, and I would gladly have passed the incident over, if I could have done so with justice to my subject. Such a course, however, did not appear possible in view of the fact that in all probability Constable's hostility to Linnell was the main cause of his claims upon the Academy being passed over in those early days of his career, and, at the same time, of the postponement of that recognition which ultimately came unaided, by those who ought to have been the first sponsors of his genius.

In view of this hostility, the question will obtrude itself, Was Constable jealous of his young competitor in landscape art? He could not fail to perceive the great gifts of his friend, and to recognise in him a genius for the interpretation of Nature equal, and in some respects superior, to his own, any more than Linnell could fail to acknowledge and admire in him those wonderful qualities of tone and breadth of effect that for ever place his works in the foremost rank of landscape art. But Constable had become soured by the length of time he had had to wait for recognition. He had seen lesser men preferred before him, and had seen them become rich and well thought of whilst his works were still returned to him unsold. This had galled him, and we cannot wonder if he showed little generosity to his rivals. In that the Academy was slow to acknowledge his merits it did him injustice, and injustice too often begets injustice.

That such is the explanation of Constable's attitude towards our artist there is little room for doubt.

A few years later he was the cause of a scandal getting about respecting William Collins similar to the one which did so much harm to Linnell. This occurred when all three were living at Hampstead, and when they were often travelling to and from town together by the coach. The scandal had reference to a commission which Collins had received from Sir Robert Peel, and for which, when finished, he had, according to Constable's statement, overcharged him.

Meeting Linnell one day on the top of the Hampstead coach, Constable said : 'Have you heard the story about Collins and Sir Robert Peel?' and repeated the scandal.

Linnell asked him if he had told Collins what was being said about him. Constable said he had not, and that it was no business of his to do so.

A week or so later they met on the coach again, and Constable, returning to the subject of the scandal, said :

'I fear it is a true bill against Collins.'

Linnell again asked him if he had got Collins's version of the affair. Constable said he had not, and repeated that it was no affair of his. Linnell replied :

'I don't believe a word of it, and if you won't go and see Collins about it, I will.'

They happened to be passing very near Collins's

house at the time, and Linnell straightway got down from the coach and went and told him what Constable had been saying respecting him. Collins was very indignant when he heard the story, and said he believed that it was a pure invention, he himself having heard nothing of the affair. It was decided, however, to put the matter into Mulready's hands to investigate, because he, on account of his high character, was beyond suspicion. Mulready accordingly called upon Sir Robert Peel, and asked him if there was any truth in the report. Sir Robert said there was none whatever ; he was perfectly satisfied with the pictures which he had commissioned Mr. Collins to paint for him, and he had been charged no more for them than he had agreed to pay.

All this is the more surprising on Constable's part when it is seen on what friendly terms the three artists nominally were. Referring to his own affair, Linnell writes : ‘Constable never mentioned Read's story to me, though he was in the habit of visiting me, and receiving visits and other attentions from me.’

That their relations were, and continued to be—outwardly at least—of a cordial nature, there are several letters of Constable's to prove. On July 27, 1831, he writes to Linnell :

‘MY DEAR SIR,

‘35, Charlotte Street.

‘I have a mournful satisfaction in possessing the portrait of poor Gooch. He was my old and much-esteemed friend.

' This portrait is one of the most perfect I ever saw. I can nearly hold converse with it, and I should immediately have expressed my great thanks to you had I not hoped for an opportunity of calling upon you for that purpose.

' Fearing, however, that event might not be so soon as it ought (as I go into Suffolk to-morrow to fetch my little girls), I write as I now do in haste to thank you likewise for the friendly note which accompanied your desirable present.

' I am, dear sir,

' Truly your obliged

' JOHN CONSTABLE.

' P.S.—You may know that Dr. Gooch presented me with most of my children !

Another letter is dated July 30, 1835. It is as follows :

' DEAR LINNELL,

' I have had the pleasure of receiving your beautiful work, and for which I lose no time in sending you the money. I was not aware of its full extent and the sum to which it must ultimately amount (though so reasonable). May I, therefore, beg to propose a copy of my own work (proofs) as part of payment, which I should name to you at £3? If this should be agreeable to you, I shall possess the remainder of the work of Michael Angelo with unalloyed delight, otherwise I am afraid it is beyond my means of attainment.



'I hope you are well, the two new infants, Mrs. Linnell, and your other children. This is very trying weather, and perhaps you are hotter at Bayswater than we are, except at night.

'I hope to come your way soon, when I shall have the pleasure of calling on you.

'Yours very truly,

'JOHN CONSTABLE.'

CHAPTER XI.

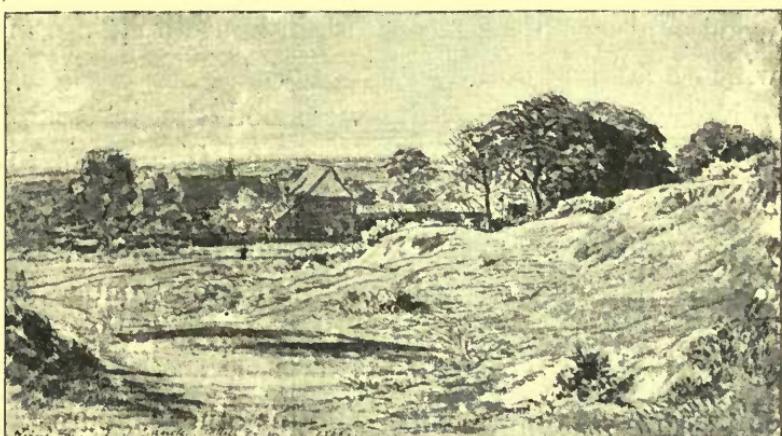
Removal to North End, Hampstead—Incessant Labours—Adventure with a Furious Bull—Partial Breakdown—Mulready's Influence—William Blake's Visits to Hampstead—Other Visitors—Blake's Designs for Virgil's Pastorals—Dr. Thornton and Mr. Tatham—Sir Thomas Lawrence—Copying Old Masters—Reading.

IN the summer of 1822 Linnell took lodgings for Mrs. Linnell and the children at North End, Hampstead, at a place called Hope Cottage, where they remained until the autumn. He did not stay with them himself, but went up on Sundays, returning to town on Monday morning. Occasionally, too, he went in the evening after work, going back to Cirencester Place the same night or the next morning.

Finding that the fresh air of Hampstead had been beneficial both to himself and his family (which now numbered four children, three—Elizabeth, John, and James—having been born at Cirencester Place), he in the following year took lodgings at Collins' Farm, North End, for a couple of months, and removed his family thither on August 29, 1823. He did not stay there all the time himself, but visited Hampstead occasionally and made sketches there.

It is curious to note that Linnell makes no entry in his journal of any visit paid by Blake to Hampstead during these two years. The circumstance is probably explainable by the fact that Cirencester Place was still our artist's residence, and that the other was only a temporary abode, which he himself only visited occasionally.

In March, 1824, Linnell took his family to live permanently at Collins' Farm, retaining the house



NORTH END, HAMPSTEAD.

(*From a study in chalk by J. Linnell.*)

at Cirencester Place, however, as a studio, and going to and fro by coach.

Linnell was now in his thirty-third year, and in robust health, notwithstanding the great strain he was putting upon his powers. For, not content with the work he had done during the day, he had something else to occupy his mind and keep his hands busy when he reached home, either some

of his miniature portraits to proceed with, some engravings to do, or what not. At Hampstead he executed a portrait of Mrs. Garratt and a miniature on ivory of Mrs. Squire (both in 1825); also his engravings of the portraits of Mr. Pritchard, Mr. Lowry, Mr. Chevalier, some plates of Norwegian scenery, etc. Thus he occasionally spent a day or two at Hampstead by way of rest.

In August, 1826, he built a small additional room adjoining his other rooms at the farm. It was of wood, and was his first venture in house-building, of which he did a good deal later on.

Not many men could have stood the incessant labour that he was undergoing, and it appears to have told upon him in the long-run. But for several years, at least, he seems to have perceived no reason to relax his energies. One cannot but wonder at his ceaseless activity, and at the many-sidedness of his genius, which in his case, at least, was one pre-eminently of taking pains. To his other labours at this time he added that of making the family bread. He first began this onerous business in 1820, about a year after going to live in Cirencester Place, and he did not relinquish it for many years afterwards. His object, of course, was to be sure of having unadulterated bread, which was not so easily procurable from the public bakehouses then as now. He used to go through the whole operation himself, from the putting in of the yeast to the baking; and when the family went to live at Hampstead, he took the bread up there after making it. Many a time, he was

wont to say, he was obliged to leave his sitters in order to go and knead up the dough.

Sometimes, after his day's labours, he used to walk home to Hampstead; and on one occasion, when painting the likeness of his daughter Hannah, he carried her the greater part of the way on his shoulder.

One morning as he was on his way to town he had an adventure with an infuriated bull, which resulted in nothing more serious than a fright, although it might have been otherwise but for his presence of mind. He was on the highroad between Highgate and Hampstead, when he suddenly heard the cry of 'Mad bull!' followed by the clattering of the animal's hoofs on the hard ground. Before he had time to get out of the way the brute was upon him. Then it was that his athletic training turned to his advantage. Keeping his eye on the bull, he held out his cloak, which he was carrying on his arm, somewhat in the manner of the bull-fighters, allowing the infuriated animal to charge that, he meanwhile springing lightly on one side. Then, while the bull carried it off on his horns and butted at it against the bank, he made for the stile and got safely over. Meanwhile, the bull had caught sight of another man, and charged at him. But he, too, escaped him by scrambling over the railings, and the bull, deluded a second time, dashed away down the road. Then Linnell was able to go back and get his cloak and proceed on his way.

Mrs. Linnell used frequently to relate this occur-

rence, chiefly because of an incident, which she held to be providential, connected with it. That morning she and the children had gone out with the artist, intending to walk a little way with him, but they had been compelled to turn back in consequence of the threatening rain. Thus, she held, they were saved from the danger they would have run had they all been along with her husband when he encountered the bull.

It is not certain in what year this incident took place, or whether it had any effect in accelerating the physical breakdown which occurred towards the end of his residence at Hampstead, and which had a great deal to do with his final decision to take a house nearer to town. Linnell always attributed this temporary collapse in the prime of life to the strain he had put upon himself in the early days of his acquaintance with Mulready. Albeit physically so much less powerful than his friend, he was, as already stated, tempted to emulate his prowess with the gloves, and in walking, jumping, etc., as well as in hard work, and was thus led greatly to overtax his powers. In this respect, as we have seen, he considered Mulready's influence over him prejudicial.

Referring to this subject in his autobiography, he says: 'No one could know Mulready intimately, as I did, without having all their faculties taxed to the utmost, and mine were taxed often beyond my strength, which was very inferior to his; he being a strong, active man of 5 feet 10 inches high, while

my stature never exceeded 5 feet 5 inches. My muscular frame, however, was developed, and I might have been throughout life a much stronger person than I proved to be had not excess of exercise and other imprudence counteracted the good to a great extent. By trying to keep pace with Mr. Mulready—a man so much beyond me in powers of endurance—I overtaxed my powers, and eventually, in the midway of this our mortal life, I became suddenly exhausted, and have never completely recovered.'

This illness appears to have come on in 1827. It incapacitated him from any severe physical exertion for some time, and, indeed, he seems never to have thoroughly recovered his former bodily vigour. But on his removal from Hampstead to Bayswater he began gradually to improve, partly in consequence of a change of treatment. Dr. Thornton (William Blake's friend) was his chief medical adviser while at Hampstead, and he appears to have been a better friend than physician.

While at Hampstead, however, the artist spent several pleasant years at Collins' Farm, which is rendered the more interesting to us because it is more associated with the memory of Blake than either of the other houses in which he frequently visited Linnell.

To this rural abode Blake used frequently to walk on a Sunday, and spend the afternoon and evening with the artist and his family, often meeting there other equally congenial spirits, such as Varley,

Dr. Thornton, George Richmond, Samuel Palmer, etc. He seldom missed a Sunday if he could help it, drawn thither by the genial hospitality and affection of his host and hostess, though all the while protesting that the air of Hampstead was inimical to his health. He had a theory that the north generally was malefic, if not devilish, and that not merely in a physical or cosmical sense, but spiritually also. The south, on the contrary, was to him synonymous with all that is wholesome, genial, beneficent, and spiritually good.

The happy days of his youth had been associated with the pleasant fields of Surrey. There he had enjoyed the early days of love's dream--there he had had his first vision ; whereas the more bracing northern suburbs were identified by him with pain and discomfort. But in this respect Hampstead appears to have borne the bell in point of fanciful detestation. For even whilst enjoying its quiet in the bosom of his friend's family, or its beauty from the artist's garden or summer-house, he would not infrequently be tempted to inveigh against its unpropitious qualities. And his views on this, as upon other subjects, would sometimes be expressed with a brusqueness and force altogether at variance with his usual amiable manner. On one occasion, for instance, when Mrs. Linnell ventured to express her humble opinion that Hampstead was a healthy place, Blake startled her by saying, 'It is a lie! It is no such thing!'

Several of the artist's sons and daughters re-

member these visits of Blake to Hampstead. They recollect him as a grave and sedate gentleman, with white hair, a lofty brow, and large lambent eyes (which would fill with tears when their mother sang one of her favourite Scottish songs), and a kind and gentle manner. He was fond of children, and often took Mr. Linnell's little ones upon his knee, and talked to them in a grave, yet withal an amusing manner, telling them stories, and readily falling in with, and taking part in, their amusements. On one occasion, seeing the eldest girl, Hannah, busy upon a rude attempt at a face, he took the pencil, and showed her by a few deft touches how to give it the semblance of a real human countenance. This incident has been magnified by Gilchrist into his teaching her drawing. She afterwards, like most of the family, learned to draw and paint very cleverly ; but the training was all her father's, and not in any sense Blake's.

Although the connection between the two was one of friendship, it may be said that Linnell was in a way a pupil of Blake. So receptive a mind as that of the younger artist could not help being greatly influenced by one like Blake, who exercised a powerful sway over all who came in contact with him. But Linnell was peculiarly sensible to his influence. In some respects the two men could hardly have been more opposite in character and disposition than they were, and yet there was much in common between them. They lived on a similar plane of spiritual thought ; they both had great

reverence for the Scriptures ; and both in their way were of a highly poetic turn. Each, too, was characterized for the simplicity of his wants, and for his genuine love of Nature. It would be difficult to say, perhaps, which had the more masterful spirit, which was the more independent in his views, and which the more courageous in following out his convictions. Linnell had already shown how resolute in this respect he could be, and how uncompromising he was in his allegiance to the truth. Such a temperament could not help being strengthened in its vigorous democratic tendencies by the man who, during the period of the French Revolution, had the courage to don the *bonnet rouge*, and wear it in the street.

For nine years these two lived in the closest and most intimate friendship. From the day it commenced till the day of Blake's death it was never interrupted. Nothing dimmed the younger artist's admiration and reverence for the elder ; he grew to think more and more of his wonderful powers as his knowledge of him increased, while the object of his veneration repaid him with a friendship that was all the stronger because it was bound up with the most sacred feelings of gratitude.

The Dr. Thornton above referred to as a frequent visitor at Hampstead and Linnell's family doctor was a man of much learning in science and literature, as well as the author of many works. He brought out an edition of Virgil's 'Pastorals,' for which Blake executed some remarkably fine illustrations, en-

graving them himself on wood. They narrowly escaped being sacrificed, however, to the doctor's and the publishers' lack of taste, and were only saved by the enthusiastic admiration of artists who saw them. The following letter from Thornton to our artist would appear to indicate that, in despair with Blake's designs, he had appealed to him to help him out of his difficulty by the aid of lithography :

‘ 13, Union Street,
‘ Broad Street, City,
‘ September 15, 1820.

‘ MY DEAR FRIEND,

‘ Enclosed you see what Blake's “Augustus” produces in the usual mode of printing. How much better will be the stone, provided it turns out well ! It will amalgamate with wood, and not injure by comparison. I long to see your Virgil transferred upon the stone. It has one great advantage —authority for the drawing, superior execution, and cheap printing and perpetuity. Permit me to thank you for your kind exertions. It should be a common cause to get me out a Virgil worthy of the nation for the benefit of the rising generation, and to inspire them with a love for the arts.

‘ I remain, dear sir,

‘ Most truly your obliged friend,
‘ ROBERT JOHN THORNTON.’

Another letter, dated, however, a few years earlier (1816), is of passing interest, as showing in what a

variety of ways our artist was called upon to exercise his talent. It is as follows :

‘ DEAR LINNELL,

‘ My son has a lecture on astronomy January 15, after which a concert and oratorio. He will send you and family orders.

‘ If you could paint a transparency of Galileo, it would be the making of him, as his lecture turns on that great man with a fine forehead.

‘ Yours truly,

‘ R. J. THORNTON.

‘ Your sister is much better.’

If we may judge from the following letter from Mr. Tatham, Dr. Thornton was a better scholar than physician :

‘ Queen Street, Mayfair,
‘ Friday.

‘ DEAR LINNELL,

‘ I regret your health will not permit you to take the journey with me to Uppark. I am inclined to think from the reasons you state that your decision is a right one. Had the weather been tolerable, I should have walked up to you ; and hesitated some time this morning before I quitted Alpha Road. I have by this post apprized Sir Harry ; and if I can possibly bring about a few sittings when they come up in January, I shall be very happy to do it, and will do all I can to hold the commission for you. I know there is no pressing

haste about it. You know you can always command my friendly offices whenever an opportunity is thrown before me.

' I recommend you to live freely, not too frugally ; take care what you let in, and what you let out. I will send you the song of " Begone, dull care." You may set down a good deal for the humidity of the weather ; it must affect all persons of unstable nerves—come a good frost, and you will be a " cock upon a rock." You have much to be very happy for—a good wife, fine children, fine talents, and a competence. You have been a most successful man, and you are now walking on the highroad of preferment. Count up all this, and you will find it don't amount to a trifle.

' My poor afflicted son is pulled back and back ; the subject is worn out with me. I wish I could get him abroad ; but my hands are tied and bound —my large family and my decreasing occupations threaten straitened circumstances. I am the milch cow to fifteen living souls—think of that, Johnny !

' "The Lord is my Shepherd ; I shall not want." The whole Book of Psalms is my support. The more I drink of the Fountain of Wisdom, the stronger I am ; the less I drink, the weaker I am.

' Remember me cordially to dear Mrs. L. and family, and accept the united good wishes of your old crony, my dearest wife, and of all my family.

' I hear you still consult that Top-sawyer

Thornton. He has been a thorn in my side ; but I endeavour to forget his unsuccessful and expensive experiments upon my poor son.

‘Yours ever truly,

‘C. H. TATHAM.’

During these years at Hampstead, and, indeed, for some years later, Linnell was still chiefly occupied with portraits, although he was now getting somewhat better prices. But he was not neglecting landscape. His diary records that he made his first sketch from Nature at Hampstead in July, 1822. This was, of course, during his first summer at Hope Cottage. He afterwards made a large number of sketches in the neighbourhood of his home, and used many of them in subsequent pictures. These studies are still in existence, and very fine work they display.

During these years Linnell was kept busy with a great variety of work. In the months of June and July, 1822, he worked for Sir Thomas Lawrence upon a small unfinished portrait in oil-colours of the Duke of Wellington on horseback, begun by Mr. Stephanoff, from the large life-size picture by Sir Thomas. His diary records that he worked for seventeen days on the portrait, and received £35 for what he had done on it.

It was whilst our artist was at work on the portrait of the Great Duke that he took the opportunity of introducing Blake to Sir Thomas Lawrence, whom he induced at one period or another to pur-

chase several of his friend's works, notably 'The Wise and Foolish Virgins' and 'The Dream of Queen Katherine.'

The relations between Linnell and Sir Thomas Lawrence were always very cordial, and subsisted till the latter's death in 1830. On one occasion Sir Thomas got his own frame-maker to enlarge the frame of a small portrait of Linnell's—it was of William Denny, youngest son of Sir Edward Denny, Bart., painted at King's End House, near Worcester—in order to make it fit a space on the line at the Academy. In 1822 he gave him a letter to Lord Cowper, in order that he might obtain permission to finish his copy on ivory of his lordship's celebrated *Raphael*. It was begun at the Royal Academy, Somerset House, in the February of the above year, and was proceeded with at Lord Cowper's house in George Street, Hanover Square, during the months of April and May, being finished on May 8.

About the same time (1822) he made a small copy from a Rembrandt (of 'Abraham and Hagar') for Captain Digby Murray; for whom, in the same year, he painted his picture of 'Ariel' (the price being £35). He had previously executed several other commissions for Captain Murray, among the number being (in 1819) a picture of 'Venus rising from the Sea,' and (in 1821) small oil copies of two large companion pictures by Titian, in the collection of the Marquis of Stafford, 'Diana and Acteon,' and 'Diana and Calisto,' for which he received 100 guineas each.

To the same period belong the whole-length portraits in oil of Lady Agnes Buller and Captain Buller (for which the artist notes that he received 150 guineas each), and the miniature upon ivory of Lady Elizabeth, daughter of Lord Mansfield ; also, though a little later (1824), the charming miniature group of the artist's own children.

During all this time, notwithstanding his multifarious labours, Linnell was not neglecting to enlarge his mind by various reading and study. He was an omnivorous reader, every description of literature finding a ready appetite in his mind, except, perhaps, fiction ; albeit of that too he had read deeply in his younger days. But later in life he did not do so much novel-reading, and his acquaintance with works of that nature was very limited. He read most of Walter Scott's romances, and for one of them, '*The Heart of Midlothian*', he afterwards designed and painted an illustration, and—although this was much later in life—he derived great pleasure from the perusal of several of Charles Dickens's works. Knowing Wilkie Collins also, he was induced to read his '*Woman in White*', if not one or two more of his novels. But, with the exception of the latter two authors, and perhaps one or two others, his acquaintance with later fictional literature was not great. His lightest reading was apt to be somewhat substantial, and amongst his books for diversion were such works as Horne Tooke's '*Diversions of Purley*', Fuller's '*Worthies*', Aristophanes, Pope's '*Essay on Man*', Lucian's

Dialogues, Butler's 'Hudibras,' Hone's Works, etc. A man is known by his books as well as by his works, and it is interesting and instructive, as regards the development of his mind, to know that, during the middle period of his life, when his character was broadening and deepening, Linnell read, among others, the following works : Rapin's History, Herodotus, Thucydides, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, Locke's Works, Dr. Gill's Commentary on the Bible, and Plato's Works (translated by Thomas Taylor). In the latter especially he took great delight, and at one time or another devoted much time to their study. At this period also he became possessed of a good edition of Milton's Works, both in prose and poetry. He admired all the great Puritan's writings, but most of all, perhaps, those in prose, in which he found a spirit and an earnestness akin to his own, and from which he derived much benefit. Among the poets to whom he turned for inspiration or relaxation, in addition to those previously mentioned, were Dante, Spenser, Chaucer, Dryden, Young, Goldsmith, Thomson, Sheridan, and, though somewhat later, Byron.

CHAPTER XII.

Blake and Linnell—Beginning of their Friendship—Gilchrist's Statements about Blake—Blake and Varley—The 'Visionary Heads'—Estimate of Varley—Letters by Varley—His Death—Blake's 'Inventions' for the Book of Job—'Vala'—First Letter from Blake—Memoranda about Blake.

GILCHRIST, in his 'Life of William Blake,' states that Blake was introduced to Linnell 'about 1813.' This is an error, and has been copied into nearly all the subsequent biographies of Blake. As a matter of fact it was not until 1818 that the two became known to each other. They met in the early days of their acquaintance at Linnell's house in Rathbone Place, and his residence there did not begin till towards the end of 1817. He went to see Blake 'in company with the younger Mr. George Cumberland,' of Bristol. Blake was then living in South Molton Street, Oxford Street, where he rented a second floor. Gilchrist goes on to say, also erroneously: 'The intimacy between the two arose from the younger artist applying to the elder to help him over some engravings then in hand, from portraits of his own.' Linnell did not seek Blake's acquaintance for

that object, although he gave him work to do after he had become intimate with him. The former's own account of the matter is: 'We soon became intimate, and I employed him to help me with an engraving of my portrait of Mr. Upton, a Baptist preacher, which he was glad to do.'

The date of the engraving is 1818-19. It was laid in by Blake, and then worked upon and completed by Linnell. The price paid to Linnell for this engraving was 50 guineas, Blake receiving 15 guineas for his share of the work.

Blake was glad of this work, because, as Linnell records, he had 'scarcely enough employment to live by at the prices he could obtain.' 'Everything in art,' he adds, 'was at that time at a very low ebb. Even Turner could not sell his pictures for as many hundreds as they have since fetched thousands.'

A similarity of thought between the two men soon led to a very close intimacy between them, and they remained fast friends until the death of the elder closed as kindly a chapter of friendship as is anywhere to be met with in the annals of art or literature.

Referring to these early days of their acquaintance, Linnell writes :

'I soon encountered Blake's peculiarities, and was sometimes taken aback by the boldness of some of his assertions. I never saw anything the least like madness. I never opposed him spitefully, as many did. But being really anxious to fathom, if possible, the amount of truth that there might be in his most

startling assertions, I generally met with a sufficiently rational explanation in the most really friendly and conciliatory tone. Even to John Varley, to whom I had introduced Blake, and who readily devoured all the marvellous in Blake's most extravagant utterances—even to Varley Blake would occasionally explain, unasked, how he believed that both Varley and I could see the same visions as he saw—making it evident to me that Blake claimed the possession of some powers, only in a greater degree, than all men possessed, and which they undervalued in themselves, and lost through love of sordid pursuits, pride, vanity, and the unrighteous Mammon.'

Linnell was busy putting down autobiographical notes at the time that Gilchrist's 'Life' was published, and after reading it he makes the following note : 'As, however, Blake's "Life" has just been published, I shall only say now that several matters related therein are, in my opinion, great exaggerations. The story, for instance, of Blake and his wife acting Adam and Eve, and asking Mr. Butts to walk in, is so entirely unlike everything I have known of him, so improbable from the impracticability of the thing on account of climate, that I do not think it possible, but believe it must have grown into the story related in Gilchrist's "Life of Blake" through its travels "about town," as stated. Blake was very unreserved in his narrations to me of all his thoughts and actions, and I think, if anything like this story had been true, he would have told me of it. I am

sure he would have laughed heartily at it if it had been told of him or of anyone else, for he was a hearty laugher at absurdities.'

It must be granted that Linnell had a right, from his long and close intimacy with Blake, to speak like this. It was an intimacy which began, as Gilchrist observes, when most, if not all, of Blake's old friends had disappeared, chiefly through death, and he was almost entirely alone. It is one of the younger painter's greatest glories, and one of the things for which the world owes him a debt of gratitude, that he not only perceived the great qualities of Blake, but that, although then but a struggling artist himself, and in a sense (it may be said) his pupil, yet he became his thoughtful and generous patron, and saw that to the end of his days he was wanting in nothing that would add to his comfort or content.

In Varley Blake found an erratic though, in many respects, a congenial spirit. Varley had a strange leaning to subjects crepuscular and occult, as, for instance, to physiognomy, phrenology, palmistry, astrology (practising the latter professionally, and charging a fee for calculating nativities), etc. ; but he could never make any headway in his endeavours to convince Blake of the truth of astrology ; nor could he induce him to regard it with favour.

'Your fortunate nativity,' he would say, 'I count the worst. You reckon to be born in August, and have the notice and patronage of kings, to be the best of all ; whereas, the lives of the Apostles and martyrs, of whom it is said the world was not

worthy, would be counted by you as the worst, and their nativities those of men born to be hanged.'

The criticism shows that Blake, in spite of his visionary tendencies, was, after all, of a less credulous and more ratiocinative nature than Varley, of whom Linnell says: 'Varley believed in the reality of Blake's visions more than even Blake himself.'

In regard to the famous 'Visionary Heads' drawn



WILLIAM BLAKE AND JOHN VARLEY ARGUING.

(From a sketch by John Linnell.)

by Blake for Varley, and in his presence, the latter believed that his friend saw the spirits of the men he drew—in short, that William Wallace, Edward I., David, Solomon, etc., actually appeared to him as they still live, disengaged from the flesh, in the abodes of the departed. Indeed, the famous water-colourist would seem to have been the intellectual father of much of the spiritualism of these latter

days. He regarded Blake as nothing more nor less than a 'medium,' to use a name which came into vogue at a later date. He was fond of arguing with him, and so drawing him out. Linnell was equally fond of listening and learning what he could from the talk. A sketch which he made of the two men as they sat arguing together in his parlour at Hampstead gives us very characteristic portraits of them, the one calm and dignified, the other all impulse and excitement.

After referring to these matters in his autobiography, Linnell concludes with some remarks on Varley which will suitably find a place here :

'Poor Varley ! what a lesson his life afforded ! . . . Varley, though always calculating nativities, could never calculate probabilities. His wishes were his guides, and he profited scarcely at all by experience, and put implicit confidence in the most treacherous and crafty people. His want of Christian faith and conscience prevented him from acquiring the wisdom that might have saved him from a miserable end. All his acquaintances benefited by his generous activity to serve them, and no one more, perhaps, than myself. It was extraordinary how easily Varley acquired a large and valuable professional connection among the nobility and others, and how ready he was to recommend to their notice and employment his brother artists. I believe that Mulready was greatly indebted in that way to Varley. . . . His best friends looked with regret upon his want of sagacity. Like Haydon, he

was always trying for a loan from any friends he made, so that many of his best friends were compelled to avoid him. I remember him once saying to me, " Well, thank God, I am nearly out of debt. I have only two writs against me, and one judgment upon which my goods can be seized ; and the lawyer is such a good fellow that he will wait if I give him a picture, which, by-the-bye, I want you to put the figures in to-morrow."

Amongst the mass of correspondence left by the artist are a number of letters and notes by Varley and his wife. Nearly all of them contain applications for money ; some of them are requests for payment for work done ; but the majority are gruesome appeals for the loan of a few shillings, scribbled on dirty bits of paper in lead-pencil. Two or three will suffice to show at once the nature of the man and the straits he was put to.

' DEAR LINNELL,

' I have just been arrested, and I can give bail provided I can get a few pounds. Do you not think that (if) Mr. Garrison knew that I was now locked up, he might lay out £8 or £10 with me in drawings ? or, if not, do you think if I were to send the picture and frame of Bamborough, or any other drawings besides, he would let me have £6 or £7 ? I shall lose 3 guineas to-morrow morning if I do not get out, and be put to expense besides. Therefore, if you can, by the sale of my drawings, or any other means, assist me to get out to-night, I shall be able

to go home for good, and my affairs will then be arranged, as all the writs will be done away with. In serving me thus, I think it is the most important time I know of. I have seen one creditor who is willing to take the writ out of the office.

‘I am, yours truly,

‘J. VARLEY.

‘Should any delay occur with the principal creditor, I know that paying-time will turn him to my side (?). All this may be considerably for the best, as I can then go home and see Mr. Woodburn, who wishes to have some drawings of me.

‘I should like to see you if you think you may not lose too much time. I can get bail on a receipt.

‘I am at Mr. Wilson’s, the officer, Warwick Court, Holborn.’

‘DEAR LINNELL,

‘If you can induce Mr. Woodburn to take the drawing I sent to-day, I would commission you to make it a bargain for him, as every pound will be worth three to me just now; and it makes a suitable variety. He may allow for the disadvantage of candlelight.

‘I am cautious of venturing out just now, but will manage some time this evening to see you.

‘Yours truly,

‘J. VARLEY.’

Most of the epistles are undated, but here is one with the year and day of the month on it. The ‘in cogg.’ is delicious.

'December 26, 1829.

'DEAR LINNELL,

'I have sent the frame, and if it suits, and you can send me some money, it will save much time. If you can send it by the bearer, enclose in a paper directed to "Mr. Smout's, No. 46, Gerard Street," and I will send you an acknowledgment this afternoon. I am at 41 (*in cogg.*), but don't want it to be directed to me.

'Yours truly,

'J. VARLEY.'

Some of the letters, as the following—without signature—refer to business:

'DEAR SIR,

'I think you have done them beautifully. The Scorpio is quite magnificent, and Lady Ebring-ton greatly improved and very interesting. Leo has quite the right forehead now. If the upper eyelash of Aries could be made to shade or soften itself into the eye it would be better; and the dark line at the lower point of the chin lightened, with perhaps a little touch at the inner corner of the eye, might improve it. It looks very well.'

The Scorpio, Aries, etc., refer to some engravings that Linnell did for Varley's little work on astrology.

According to Linnell, Varley—talented, generous to a fault, the soul of good-humour and good-fellowship, whose house was at once a home for the

destitute of the artistic and literary professions, a rough-and-ready academy for aspirants in the arts, and a Bohemian club where all the freest and most fruitful spirits of the time could meet and ventilate their notions and aspirations—Varley, the Father of Modern Water-Colour Art, died in a debtor's prison !

But this appears to be a mistake, as I have it on the authority of Mr. William Vokins, the well-known picture-dealer, of Great Portland Street, that he died in his house.* He died, however,

* I am indebted to Mr. Vokins for the following account of Varley's last days :

'John Varley was born in 1778, and died in 1842. The account of him in Redgrave's "Dictionary of Artists of the English School," otherwise accurate, is incorrect respecting his illness and death. Varley was always in the hands of money-lending lawyers, commonly paying from 30 up to 60 per cent. for loans of money. He was unselfish to the extent of imprudence, frequently giving away to any case of distress what he really wanted for himself. He was a most sincere and kind-hearted friend. I have heard him say that in one year he had upwards of thirty writs served upon him. Towards the close of his life his difficulties increased. He had embarked in an unfortunate scheme, and had taken out a patent for the easier draft of carriages. A friend had advanced to him £1,000 in order that Varley might have a share in the speculation. Unfortunately this advance was made in acceptances, and not in money. Varley discounted the bills and acquired a share, but his friend failed to honour the bills when they matured, and the scheme ending in failure, the discounted bills were thrown back on Varley, who was unable to meet them. Great embarrassment followed. Writs were issued on his goods in his residence (at that time at Bayswater Hill), and also on his person. A poor lawyer's clerk whom he had aided had to serve the latter, but instead of doing so took him to his own humble lodging in Gray's Inn Road, where I found him in great discomfort, but still cheerfully at work. The following day, by stealth, he was removed to my then private residence, 67, Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, where Varley remained six weeks in hiding, painting away, and as happy as if he had no

as he appears always to have lived—in debt. It was a sad end for such a man—for one with so much talent and so much good-nature. Possibly much of his misfortune was brought upon himself by his improvident habits, and his dreamy, speculative, and happy-go-lucky nature ; and yet one cannot but think—to have recourse to his own astrological way of looking at things—that there must have been something malefic in the aspect of the stars of a man who, besides being afflicted with an idiot son, as well as thrice burned out, was many times in prison for debt. And yet, ‘all these troubles are necessary to me,’ he once said to John Linnell. ‘If it were not for my troubles I should burst with joy !’

In 1819 Linnell painted in oil for Varley the heads of William Wallace and Edward I., life size, from Blake’s drawings. Gilchrist, in his ‘Life,’ says that he painted also the famous ‘Ghost of a Flea.’ Linnell, however, makes no mention of the latter either in his journal or in his autobiography, although it is to be presumed that Gilchrist obtained his

anxiety. The confinement and want of exercise seriously affected his digestion, and brought on an illness from which he died rather suddenly.

‘I doubt if he ever had an enemy. He was over-sanguine, and full of energy, and knew he only wanted time to enable him to overcome all his difficulties. Distinguished people frequenting my house of business would beg to be introduced to him, not more for his artistic celebrity than for his astrological knowledge, and for the interest there was in the man himself, for he was a most genial spirit. Astrology was a mania with him, and his common theme of conversation at table. He was no sooner introduced to a stranger than he asked him the date of his birth, and having obtained that knowledge, he soon made out the stranger’s horoscope.’

information from our artist. The original drawings of the 'Ghost of a Flea,' together with thirty-six of the Visionary Heads, Linnell purchased from Blake, and they are still in the possession of the Linnell family.

About 1820, if not earlier, Blake produced his first set of twenty-two water-colour drawings, or 'Inventions,' as he calls them, for the Book of Job. These were probably the last works of his that his old friend Mr. Butts purchased. Soon after that gentleman replaced the series in his hands to serve as an incentive to others to give him commissions for sets. Linnell, however, was the only person from whom he obtained an order. This was given in 1821. The outlines of this replica set were traced from the original drawings by Linnell on September 8 and 10, and were then finished by Blake. Gilchrist has made an error in regard to the date of these drawings of Job, and it has led to his mixing together the replica set Blake made for our artist and the engravings he afterwards executed for him from them. The engravings were begun in 1823, and the agreement referred to by Gilchrist has reference to them alone. The agreement reads as follows :

'March 25, 1823.—Mem. of agreement between W. B. and J. L. W. B. to engrave the set of plates from his designs to "Job," in number 20, for J. L. J. L. to pay W. B. £5 per plate, part before, and remainder when plates are finished. Also, J. L. to pay Mr. B. £100 more out of the profits of the

work as the receipts will admit of it. J. L. to find copper-plates.—(Signed) W. B., J. L.'

No profits accrued from the engravings, the sale of which barely covered the expenses. Linnell, however, seeing that the plates and the stock of engravings remained in his hands, treated Blake in a generous manner, and gave him an extra £50, which was disbursed to him from time to time, according to his needs, between March, 1823, and October, 1825. The sum which Blake thus received—in all £150—was the largest he had up to the latter date received for one commission.

In a receipt for the £150, dated July 14, 1826, it is set forth that the sum was paid 'for the copyright and plates (22 in number) of the "Job," published March, 1825, by William Blake, author.'

The replica set of drawings executed by Blake for his considerate friend and patron are still in the possession of the Linnell family. The plates also still remain in the same good keeping.

Perhaps it was in recognition of the artist's many kindnesses to him that Blake, towards the end of his life, presented him with the original and only copy of his prophetic poem, entitled 'Vala; or, The Death and Judgment of the Ancient Man' (dated 1757), which is shortly to be published.

Linnell, in addition to his other services to Blake, introduced him to some of the best friends of his declining years. Besides John Varley, he made him acquainted with Richter, Holmes, Samuel Palmer, George Richmond, C. Calvert, and Frederick

Tatham (the son of Mr. Charles H. Tatham, previously mentioned). Most of these men Blake met for the first time at Linnell's house, who, now that he was married, was a generous and kindly entertainer of his friends.

Blake's visits were chiefly associated with Cirencester Place and Hampstead, whither Linnell subsequently went to live, retaining the house in Cirencester Place as a studio. Blake had in the meantime removed from South Molton Street to Fountain Court, Strand, whence on Sundays, in the fine weather, he used to make his way up to Hampstead to spend the afternoon with his friend, the elder members of whose family can remember Blake's visits, and recount with pleasure their recollections of the wonderful old man, and his strange and fascinating talk.

It was from Fountain Court that the first of a small series of letters from Blake, which the family still set great store upon, was written. It was addressed to 'Mrs. Linnell, Collins' Farm, North End, Hampstead.' He had been to see his friend off by coach to Gloucester, and he thus reports the occurrence :

'Tuesday, October 11, 1825.

'DEAR MADAM,

'I have had the pleasure to see Mr. Linnell set off safe in a very comfortable coach, for we both got in, together with another passenger, and entered into conversation, when at length we found that we were all three proceeding on our journey. But as I had not paid, and did not wish to pay for or take so

long a ride, we, with some difficulty, made the coachman understand that one of his passengers was unwilling to go, when he obligingly permitted me to get out, to my great joy. Hence, I am now enabled to tell you that I hope to see you on Sunday morning as usual, which I could not have done if they had taken me to Gloucester.

‘I am, dear madam,

‘Yours sincerely,

‘WILLIAM BLAKE.’

Linnell's journal contains a number of references to Blake. On August 20, 1819, the artist ‘went with Mr. B. to see Harlow's copy of the Transfiguration.’ They made a number of similar art visits together. On April 24, 1820, there is the entry, ‘Went to Spring Gardens (Exhibition) with Mr. Blake. Met the Duke of Argyle.’ In the following year they went together, on March 5, ‘to the British Gallery,’ Blake afterwards dining with Linnell at Cirencester Place. Then on April 30 and May 7 respectively there are visits ‘with Mr. B. to the Water-Colour Exhibition,’ and ‘with Mr. B. to Somerset House (Academy) Exhibition.’ There are similar entries in 1823. In that year also—on April 4 and 24—Linnell went ‘with Mr. Blake to British Museum to see prints.’

Sometimes these art journeys were varied by visits of a social character or to the theatre. Thus, on May 8, 1820, they went together to see Mr. Wyatt, also to see ‘Lady Ford—saw her pictures.’ On

August 26 (Sunday) occurs the entry, 'Went to Hendon, to Mr. Woodburn's, with Mr. Blake.' In the same year, on March 27 and June 8, they went twice to Drury Lane Theatre together. There are only two entries of the kind in 1822, one of which states that 'Mr. Varley and Mr. Blake dined at Cirencester Place.' There were one or two entries in 1825, after which they cease.

Blake had now become too weak and too bad in health to venture on or care for social entertainment or miscellaneous visiting. This fact accounts for the letters we have, written by him to the artist during the years 1825 and 1826. Most of them refer to business matters, which had formerly been arranged by word of mouth, but had now to be largely conducted by correspondence, Blake not being able to get about as before.

CHAPTER XIII.

Leaning towards Quakerism—Bernard Barton, the Quaker Poet—Samuel Rogers—Abraham Cooper—Samuel Palmer—Sir David Wilkie.

AMONGST the voluminous correspondence left by Linnell, perhaps no portion of it is more interesting than a series of letters written to him by Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet, and a letter in reply to one of them by the artist himself. All the letters but two belong to the year 1830, and they throw an interesting light upon Linnell's religious views at this time. The artist had a strong inclination to join the Quakers, and the correspondence is largely concerned with that matter, which, indeed, seems to have been the originating cause of the correspondence, all of which, unfortunately, has not been preserved. Apart from this, almost the only other subject treated of in the Quaker poet's letters is Blake's works, Linnell having sent for his inspection a copy of the poet-painter's 'Inventions to the Book of Job,' and a print of one of his designs for the illustration of Dante.

There is nothing in the correspondence, nor in the artist's journal, to indicate that the two men ever

met; indeed, the letters appear to point the other way. It is probable, therefore, that they became mutually acquainted with each other through some common friend.

The first letter of the series (although it is evidently not the first which had passed between them) is an acknowledgment of a package containing the 'Job,' while the second, dated ten days later, contains a highly interesting criticism of the work. But we will let them speak for themselves :

‘Woodbridge,
‘April 12, 1830.

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,

‘Thy packet containing the copy of Blake’s Inventions for the Book of Job duly reached me the early part of last week, but absence from home, together with indisposition, and almost incessant engagements since, have prevented me from sooner thanking thee for a sight of so extraordinary a production. Were I a rich man, I would gladly and instantly purchase it for its curiosity; but since I cannot do this, I am the more indebted to thy courtesy for allowing me the gratification of inspecting it. If I can sell it for thee I will do so with pleasure, though I doubt its finding a purchaser; but I will answer for its transmission by coach, safely packed up and carriage paid, at the time stated in thine if I am unable to dispose of it, and in the interim every possible care shall be taken of it.

‘Thine truly in haste,
‘B. B.’

‘Woodbridge,

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,

‘April 22, 1830.

‘I have been a good deal indisposed for a day or two, or I should have returned Blake punctually to the day appointed; and I feel by no means well enough even now to write such a letter announcing the despatch of the book as it deserves. I cannot, however, do less than repeat my cordial thanks for the sight of so curious and extraordinary a volume; and the very first time I go to town I hope to have the pleasure of adding my personal to these written acknowledgments for the treat afforded me, as well as the gratification of seeing and conversing with one whose friendship for Blake has so highly prepossessed me in his favour; but my visits to town are, alas! few and far between; nor do I at present see a chance of paying one this summer.

‘Unwell as I have been, and incapable of doing more than attend to the routine of daily duties, I would have asked someone else to pack up and forward the Inventions had I not waited in the hope of finding a purchaser for the set, and the only person I could call to mind in this vicinity as likely to buy them I could not see till last evening—but I have seen him in vain. There is a dryness and hardness in Blake’s manner of engraving which is very apt to be repulsive to print-collectors in general—to any, indeed, who have not taste enough to appreciate the force and originality of his conceptions, in spite of the manner in which he has embodied them. I candidly own I am not surprised at

this ; his style is little calculated to take with the admirers of modern engraving. It puts me in mind of some old prints I have seen, and seems to combine somewhat of old Albert Durer with Bolswert. I cannot but wish he could have clothed his imaginative creations in a garb more attractive to ordinary mortals, or else given simple outlines of them. The extreme beauty, elegance, and grace of several of his marginal accompaniments induce me to think that they would have pleased more generally in that state. But his was not a mind to dictate to ; and what he has done is quite enough to stamp him as a genius of the highest order. A still prouder and more enduring meed of praise is due to the excellence and sterling worth of the man : his child-like simplicity, his manly independence, his noble aspirations after the purest and loftiest of all fame, appear to me to form a singular union of those virtues which distinguished the better citizens of Greece and Rome with the milder graces which adorned the primitive Apostles. To have been the friend of such a man is a proud and enviable distinction.

‘Thine most truly,
‘B. B.

‘I have paid all the carriage and postage which they tell me at the office here I can pay.’

The next two are in reply to letters by Linnell seeking information and guidance on the all-important question of his joining the Society of Friends. Incidentally in the first, however, the Dante illustra-

tion is referred to, as well as an etching of Linnell's (a copy of which he had evidently made his correspondent a present). The letters are worthy of preservation as literature only, apart from their value as expositions of Quakerism. They are as follows :

‘Woodbridge,
June 15, 1830.

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,

‘Judged by the date of thine, I must appear to thee very inattentive and negligent, and I fear thou hast suspected me of feeling quite indifferent to, or uninterested in, the subject occupying a considerable portion of it. Be assured I have neither been the one nor the other. The simple fact is that thy letter, though dated on the 13th May, did not reach me till, I think, the 3rd of June, the parcel containing it having, I suppose, gone a circuitous route; and when it did arrive, it was delivered at the Bank in my absence, and put into a desk we do not often open, so that I stumbled upon it by accident some time after it actually arrived. Had it reached me sooner, however, I hardly know whether I could have been much more prompt in my response; for I have been for the past three weeks painfully interested about a little girl, a boarder in the same family, who has been one of our domestic circle for the last four years, and who about three weeks ago was attacked by a sudden and violent inflammatory affection, which after near a fortnight's severe, but from its commencement hopeless, struggle, deprived us of one of the most amiable and interesting members of our little establishment. Her loss

has been to us a most afflicting trial, and her illness a period of most anxious and absorbing solicitude. Not another word of apology, I am sure, need be offered for my silence.

' I thank thee very cordially for Blake's illustration of a scene in Dante, and feel myself equally, if not more, thy debtor for the pretty little pastoral etching of thy own. At the risk of being thought to possess a tame and insipid taste, I must confess I prefer it to Blake's. I admire the imaginative genius displayed in the latter, but I love the simple feeling and truth to Nature evinced in the former. Not having ever seen one of thy designs before, though I had heard of thy talent as an artist, I had no idea of thy being a practitioner in my favourite department of thy art—landscape-painting. If thy colour and execution do but adequate justice to thy taste and skill in composition, I can fancy a picture, or even sketch, from thy hand to be a treat of no ordinary luxury.

' But I must turn to the more important part of thine. So far as my own taste, feeling, and judgment are competent to decide the point, I see no irreconcilable hostility between the religious principles of Friends and the indulgence of a taste for painting. But I am quite aware that a Quaker painter would be a still greater novelty than a Quaker poet, and am almost inclined to doubt whether the former would not have a still more difficult and delicate task to perform than the latter if he hoped to be regarded by the body as

orthodox and consistent. Abstractedly, there can be no necessary hostility between Quakerism and painting, because I know of no good reason why it should be more unquakerly to draw or paint a beautiful landscape than to build a fine house or lay out and embellish its grounds. But it is easy to theorize on elementary principles, which, when put in practice, involve much difficulty and perplexity. My own nutshell of a house is as full of prints and pictures as I can well hang it; but my indulgence in this respect is at variance with general practice amongst us, and would be regarded, I doubt not, as a species of laxity and latitudinarianism by many excellent and worthy members of our society. I have not time or space now to enter into arguments, but simply to state facts, which certainly, on the face of them, are a little incongruous. Most of our members—at least, among the more opulent—who give their children what is called a good education, have them taught drawing at school; yet pictures are barely tolerated amongst us—I mean on our walls—and a painter of any eminence amongst us is unknown. So stand the facts of the case. There is some little apparent inconsistency in them, I admit; but I think they would admit of explanation, if not vindication. Seeing that these things are so, I foresee that an application for admission into membership on the part of an artist of any note would very probably excite surprise in the first instance, and lead to a probably minute investigation of his unity with the

society in its vital and leading doctrines. How far thy accordance with our views would stand the test of such investigation thou canst decide better than I can. My advice would be, if on mature reflection thy inclination should become a matter of deliberate judgment, to do nothing rashly or hastily. Our creed and ritual, if I may call it such, is one possessing few external attractions and still fewer worldly advantages ; while it calls for some sacrifices, and imposes many restraints, which no judicious or reflecting person would impose on himself without a serious conviction that it was incumbent on him to do so for conscience' sake. I am far from wishing to throw the slightest impediment in the way of any honest and serious inquirer, especially in the way of one whom I respect and love for his candour and simple sincerity. I only wish thee to weigh the subject well in its different bearings. I can easily give thee the name of a Friend in London with whom thou mayst converse on the matter, if such should still be thy wish ; but give the subject full and mature deliberation first, and if I can answer any questions, or be of any use in assisting thee to form a judgment, write to me freely. Thy very affectionate friend and well-wisher,

'B. BARTON.'

'Woodbridge,
'July 1, 1830.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,

'Thine dated the 21st ult. reached me in due course, but very pressing and unpostponable

engagements have prevented my replying to it sooner.

‘To reply to it, however, so fully as inclination would lead me could hardly be compressible within the limits of a letter. I respect and esteem the candour and simplicity evinced in thine, but I foresee considerable difficulty in the way of thy admission to membership amongst us, if I rightly understand thy views and feelings. If I am incorrect, the difficulty may of course be ideal. But it strikes me from what I can gather from thine that, while on some important points thy views may coincide with those of Friends, on others they are still undecided. If in thy view what are generally considered by the world as the peculiarities of Quakerism are looked upon as mere human additions to the commands of Christ, and thou wouldest not choose to be known either by thy dress or address for a Quaker, I fear a stumbling-block would be thrown in thy way at the very commencement. Whatever may be the degree of practical license in such matters which lax professors, still retaining outward membership, may choose to allow themselves, the avowed principles of the body on these topics are well known—the exceptions only prove the existence of the rule ; and as the members most active in the discharge of discipline, and whose opinions and feelings are most influential in their respective meetings, are generally consistent Friends, walking according to what they consider “the Law and the Testimony,” I should, *a priori*, be inclined to doubt that an

applicant thus candidly avowing he could go so far and no further would seem to them a little like those of olden time who held the language, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name to take away our reproach." I feel confident, my dear friend, that I shall not give offence by following thy own example of unreserved candour. I only wish thee, if it should be thy continued wish to take the step of applying for admission to membership, to be prepared for such inquiries as common prudence, and a due regard to that order and consistency which every religious body must maintain, will naturally and necessarily lead to.

'So far as our brief and imperfect correspondence enables me to judge, I am inclined to think that, while on the subject of war and various other major points our views and opinions approximate, on many others, which I will concede are of themselves of minor import, thou art only prepared to go as far as in thy individual judgment may strike thee as called for. Thou explicitly givest as one reason for wishing to join Friends thy desire to have a good excuse for nonconformity with certain worldly customs; but is this not rather beginning at the wrong end? Is it not likely that any religious body would naturally expect such non-compliance to precede such application? I believe it more generally does, and that it will be found in the case of those who have been thus united to the society by convincement, that they have given such practical proof of unity in faith and doctrine, in life and

conversation, before they have applied for admission. Thou art doubtless aware that Friends, of all the different sects, are least distinguished by a zeal for proselytism, and most scrupulously observant of the Apostolic injunction to lay hands suddenly on no man ; though I believe there is no test required, or ordeal enjoined, from which conscientious conviction need shrink. But the conviction must be conscientious, not a question of expediency ; the unanimity of religious sentiment and feeling must be cordial and entire, not doubtful and partial. Shouldst thou be inclined to make further inquiry, I would recommend thy addressing a few lines to Peter Bedford, of Stewart Street, if thou art unable to get to town ; but a personal conference with him would be far better. I have no acquaintance whatever with the Holborn Dartons, nor do I recollect ever having seen them ; they may probably know me by name, and if a line from me can be of use, let me know.

‘ Thine truly,
‘ B. B.’

Linnell’s reply to the latter needs no comment :

‘ DEAR SIR,

‘ Porchester Terrace,
‘ Bayswater, London,
‘ *July 26, 1830.*

‘ As you are so kind as to allow me to express my opinion and feelings to you without fear of offending, I am induced to say a few words in answer to your last. I think your perception of the difficulties which lie in the way to my being admitted

as a member with you is correct, and I always feared the same would be the case ever since I first thought of the subject: not from what I have read in Barclay, but from what I have observed as to the exact resemblance of Friends to each other, which I can only account for by supposing it to be considered by them to be essential. As I agree with what I should consider the grand peculiarities of the society, and have avowed and practised them, it appears to me that I should be a proper person to belong to the society, and I seek it that I might continue to avoid worldly customs (when they interfere with the practice of Christian discipline) under the shelter of the privilege already obtained by the Friends. This is the motive, or partly so, of my application, and not to take away any reproach belonging to my present condition, but the contrary, to take the reproach of the Quaker, as far as Christian discipline leads me; but I never can affect peculiarities which do not evidently form a part of such discipline. If you say I have no right to judge of such things, but should be guided by the Church, wherein do you differ from the Papists, who insist upon a blind submission for the same alleged reason? I do not want in this to be guided by my opinion, but we should all submit ourselves to the will of God and clearly prove what we require of each other. I am willing to be guided by this principle, but when the Word of God is silent, I claim the privilege of judging for myself, though willing to hear all that can be urged. In answer to what you

say as to "beginning at the wrong end," I say I have already followed the practice of the Friends in many things and suffered for it, and that I may do so in cases which I have not yet been called to is one reason (as I have stated) why I wish to belong to the Friends. For instance, should I be called into a court of justice, having the same objection to oaths, I should be allowed the privilege of the society and should escape, so also in many other instances.

"I am happy to find you say that you "believe there is no ordeal enjoined from which conscientious conviction need shrink"; but I fear when you say that "the unanimity of religious sentiment must be cordial and entire, not doubtful or partial," that you mean something like a submission of the judgment to human authority; at least, such has been generally the plausible reason assigned for such a requisition. As I agree with you that a personal interview is the most desirable upon such subjects, I intend to wait until I have such opportunity within my reach; at present I am not able to go far to obtain it. I am much obliged for your allowing me to mention your name, and will avail myself of it when I go near Mr. Darton's. Perhaps that may lead to some acquaintance that may further the above object.

'I am, sir,

'Your sincerely obliged friend,

'J. LINNELL.

'P.S.—I hope when you are in London you will not fail to call and see me.'

The following letter, addressed to another Friend (Mr. Samuel Hare), although of much later date, may conveniently be inserted here as giving very fully and clearly Linnell's reasoned-out objections to Quaker doctrine and practice :

‘ FRIEND HARE,

‘ It is immaterial to me what form of address is used if sincere and free from those flattering titles which I do not any more than you feel at liberty to give to men, and while I think it right to obey the exhortation of Jude and “earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints,” I would avoid contending for peculiarities adopted by a small minority in opposition to all the rest of my countrymen in the use of speech, because when we contend about trifles it neutralizes our efforts in things of importance. On this account I think it injurious to the cause of truth to insist upon the use of *thou* and *thee* for *you*, because there is really no different or improper meaning conveyed in one more than the other, and as use is nearly everything in speech, in which there should be as little as possible to interrupt the flow of sense and meaning, I feel that in spite of grammar the logic is on the side of the prevailing use of the pronouns. It appears to me better to act from within from a sense of what is becoming one confessing Christ, than from without by adopting a fixed cut and colour of dress; the meek and quiet spirit should be seen in the women, and sobriety in the men, uncontradicted by the

presence of anything contrary in the dress, all which might exist with sufficient variety of form and colour to allow of suitable arrangements for each person. When useless points of difference are removed, the serious things become evident and stand out in stronger relief, the enemy of truth has not the opportunity of evading conviction so easily by making the controversy turn upon an unimportant matter.

‘Your letter, dear sir, you see, has liberated me from the fear I at first felt that I had overstepped the privilege of a Christian brother (at least in your opinion); I was glad to find it otherwise, and thank you. Since I received your last I have looked over Beverly again, and the abridgment, and I see that the whole of what is said in the latter is in the first part of Beverly, but in him the praise is much qualified by his XXV. Letter, I suppose you have a copy of Beverly and the American abridgment. I have not the latter, and shall be glad if you will tell me where to get one.

‘I have looked into Barclay’s “Apology,” the only book of the subject I have, and notwithstanding there is so much that I agree with, I feel painfully sensible of a deficiency of conscientiousness in his statements of the arguments. You ask me what is ignored by your sect. Why, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are both gone, and the absence defended, I think, in a sadly equivocating manner, more like special pleading to leave his adversary incapable of reply, than as if he really believed

his own statement. You will soon see what I mean if you take a Concordance and refer to the passages in which the Apostle Paul speaks of baptism. Then to defend the speaking of women in the *church assembly* (*ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ*), the very thing which the Apostle says plainly it is a shame for them to do, showing that the prophesying and praying spoken of in other places were not *ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ*. Those three passages in 1 Cor. xiv. are to me conclusive, “let your women keep silence *ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησιαις*, for it is not permitted to them to speak”; “it is a shame for women to speak *ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ*”; and the mention of the same injunction as to silence in verse 28, “if there be no interpreter let him keep silence”; and again, “if anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first be silent”—the same Greek; also 1 Tim. ii. 12. I know there are some points of difficulty in all this, but the unequivocal, reiterated plain words of the Apostle should, I think, override every seeming objection. If we could make it more evident that our controversies with the world arose from a determination “to obey God rather than men,” our refusal to comply with and sanction many things of great repute in the world would have greater weight with the more considerate part. I would on this account yield everything where mere property was concerned, I would pay all taxes demanded by the authorities. I should appear more conscientious when afterwards I refused compliance with some evidently unchristian act enjoined upon me to per-

form. I shall be glad if in the latter writings of your friends they have approached nearer to the truth, but I cannot see how you can get over some things mentioned by Beverly in his XXV. Letter. I see how you could easily adopt the American tract, because there is only the human priesthood heresy discussed, and your agreement goes the full length of all that is rejected of clerical assumption. But there is in Beverly's book, and even in yours, an implied love and submission to God and his Word that would lead me to expect a man could not long remain a Quaker (I use the word only to make myself plain). I can send you a copy of Beverly's "Heresy of Human Priesthood" if you have it not, and perhaps you can send me a copy of the American abridgment, from which, as I understand you, your tract is taken and further abridged—so that yours is an abridgment of an abridgment of Beverly.

'I am, yours truly,

'JOHN LINNELL, sen.'

After the first letters the correspondence with Bernard Barton appears to have ceased for several years, the two remaining letters of the series belonging to 1838. There is in them no longer any question of Quakerism. The gift of a copy of Blake's 'Job,' and of an engraving by the donor himself (possibly a copy of the 'Saul,' by Varley), leads the Quaker poet to pen a most interesting letter on art, for which he had evidently a very fine feeling.

‘Woodbridge,

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,

‘August 3, 1838.

‘The sight of thy handwriting was most welcome, and so will the sight of thy handicraft be in any professional record of it. Any parcel sent by the Yarmouth telegraph which leaves the White Horse, Fetter Lane, daily, addressed to me at Woodbridge, will be sure to find me. I shall quite prefer paying carriage for any performance of thine, and by that means getting it direct from thee, to obtaining it by any more circuitous channel, for the sake of saving carriage. I conclude packed on a roller it will travel very safely. Hoping soon to send thee a longer letter,

‘I am, with much respect and esteem,

‘Thy affectionate friend,

‘B. BARTON.’

‘Woodbridge,

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,

‘August 8, 1838.

‘I am thy debtor for one of the most beautiful and striking engravings I have ever seen. Our modern things, owing, perhaps, to the rage for annual plates, are refined away to a sort of elaborate prettiness and minuteness of detail which renders them works of no mark or likelihood. I hardly can tell when I have been more riveted by a print of my day than I have been by this. There is something Rembrandt-like in the sombre depth of its gloom and in the brilliancy of its gleams of light. It reminds me somewhat, too, of Martin,

and many parts of it are Blakeish, both in their conception and feeling, as well as in their execution ; only that the latter is free from his too besetting faults, extravagance and distortion, as well as that hardness which too frequently mars some of his most graceful idealities. I am no critic, remember ; I only write as I feel and think of the productions of an art which I cordially love and admire. Of this particular specimen of that art I cannot give a greater proof of the impression it has made on me than by adding that, when framed, I mean to hang it where it shall be most frequently in my sight.

'I am also extremely obliged to thee for the copy of Blake's "Job." I wish I were a man of more leisure, for if I were I should gladly run up to town for the sake of giving thee a look and having some talks about Blake—to say nothing of the delight I should feel in seeing some of his extraordinary drawings. Were I a rich man, I can scarce tell what I would not give to be the possessor of one of his imaginary portraits—I mean one of those drawn from a supposed sitter, famous in the olden time. I forget whether he ever drew Guy Fawkes ; he would have been a good subject for him.

'It's only once in a long while I get foot-loose. But I did a few months ago, and went to see some relations in Norfolk. At Yaham Rectory, whilom the residence of Dr. John Johnson—Cowper's Johnny—I saw the drawing of Cowper by Romney, done when he was Hayley's guest at Earham. 'Tis in crayons—rough, careless, and unfinished—

but such a portrait! The prints from it, except that by Harvey in Southey's edition, give no idea whatever of its force and power, and even that has softened it down a great deal. It is a tremendous portrait, not to be looked at without mingled pity and terror; it haunted me for days after. Such a picture will hardly be ever taken again unless a mad painter should again have a mad poet for his sitter. Yet painfully powerful as it is, it has no disgusting extravagance; it is a fearful and vivid reality; but though in your admiration of it a mournful feeling is the predominant one, you can't take your eyes from it, nor do you wish it: it touches a chord of sympathy in the indulgence of which you find a mournful pleasure which neutralizes the pain it would otherwise inflict. Abbott's full-length and full-dress portrait, with wig, coat, waistcoat and breeches, hung in the same room. It was really a beautifully-executed painting, with a mild, pleasing expression of countenance. It was done, too, only a month or two before the other, and both likenesses are by competent judges declared admirable; but Romney's is the portrait that rivets your attention, and engrosses your thought and feeling. But I must end my letter. Farewell affectionately, and believe me, gratefully,

'Thy friend,

'B. BARTON.

'P.S.—When the long winter evenings shall set in, I think I shall try my hand at a poem on thy engraving. If I do, I will send thee a copy as in

duty bound. Just now I am chin-deep in figure work, which must be my excuse for this hasty epistle.'

Barton does not appear to have written the poem he purposed doing; but though he did not do that, he composed the following sonnet and dedicated it—

'TO MR. LINNELL, OF BAYSWATER.

"Yet he was reduced, one of the ornaments of the age, to a miserable garret and a crust of bread, and would have perished from want, had not some friends, neither wealthy nor powerful, averted this disgrace from coming upon our country."—*Cunningham's "Life of Blake."*

'Patron and friend of him who had but few
Of either, justly worthy of thy name,
To smooth his rough and thorny path to fame;
Methinks with honest pride thou must review
That best of patronage, which took the hue
And form of friendship, by its generous aim,
To save our age and country from the shame
Which from neglected genius must accrue !
Nor wealth nor power the wretched garret sought,
Where he, the gifted artist, toil'd for bread.
'Twas thine the balm of sympathy to shed,
To soothe his wounded feelings while he wrought
Bright forms of fancy, images of thought,
Or held high converse with the glorious dead.

' BERNARD BARTON.'

Some other correspondence relating to this period may conveniently be inserted here, although it is of minor interest in comparison with that which has gone before. It serves, however, to show Linnell's intimate relations with some of the leading men amongst his contemporaries. The first letter, from Samuel Rogers, has reference to the Michael Angelo drawings, from which Linnell made his engravings :

'January 31, 1833.

‘MY DEAR SIR,

‘I am very sorry that I am under the necessity of leaving town early to-morrow morning, and am so pressed with business as to be unable to give a proper attention to the paper you have favoured me with. When I return in ten days or a fortnight, I shall be very happy to see you here, or to wait upon you.

‘Yours very truly,

‘SAML. ROGERS.

‘Two of the designs were not executed in the chapel.’

‘St. James’s Place,

‘Saturday.

‘MY DEAR SIR,

‘Then pray do me the favour to breakfast with me on Tuesday or Wednesday next, at 10 o’clock. If I hear nothing from you to the contrary, I shall hope to have the pleasure of seeing you on Tuesday.

‘Yours very truly,

‘SAML. ROGERS.’

The following letters by Abraham Cooper, the animal painter, speak for themselves. They are undated; but the portrait of Mr. (afterwards Sir) A. W. Callcott, R.A.—to the present of a copy of which the first letter evidently refers—having been engraved in 1832, it was probably written about that time. The other two letters may belong to a somewhat earlier, but hardly to a later, date.

‘ 13, New Milman Street,

DEAR SIR,

Saturday.

‘ Please to accept my best thanks for the portrait of my good friend Callcott, which I think exceedingly like, and be assured that I will mention it whenever I think it may be desired.

‘ I wish the first time you are in town you would call on Mr. Marshall, though at present I know he is very short of cash.

‘ Dear sir,

‘ Yours truly,

‘ A. S. COOPER.’

‘ 13, New Milman Street,

DEAR SIR,

Monday.

‘ I have been for some years past endeavouring to collect a slight sketch by every artist of note, together with a letter by him, either addressed to myself or otherwise. Will you permit me to ask you if you can assist me with a letter and a slight sketch by your late friend Blake, there being a very fine portrait of him after Phillips which I am anxious to add to my collection, but in the absence of the above things cannot consistently do it.

‘ Trusting your kindness will pardon this liberty,

‘ I remain, yours faithfully,

‘ To JOHN LINNELL, ESQ.’

‘ A. S. COOPER.

‘ 13, New Milman Street,

DEAR SIR,

Friday.

‘ Please to accept my best thanks for the sketch and letter by Blake, which are precisely what I wish, as my object is only to possess a genuine

memento. And now let me beg another favour ; that is, when you at any time put two or three lines together, no matter how slight, or what the subject, do not consign it to the flames, as it will be a desirable acquisition to,

‘ Dear sir,

‘ Yours most truly,

‘ A. S. COOPER.

‘ My friend Smith has sent with this a letter in explanation of his collection, which is an excellent one. It is composed of a *letter* and a *print* ; and he is anxious to know if there are any engravings after your pictures, and which you would prefer being placed in it, as he will send to his printseller for it.—A. C.’

The next letter bears the name of a gentleman who, along with his two brothers, was a well-known collector in his day. Their gallery contained many notable works, and the letter here given has reference to a Claude, upon the genuineness of which someone had cast doubts. Linnell had many dealings with the Woodburn brothers, and made copies of at least two Old Masters contained in their collection. One was a facsimile copy (for Mr. C. Hall) of a small landscape by Raphael. He also made a large copy in oil of the miniature for himself. A letter of several years’ prior date refers to ‘ the loan of the Raphael for a short time,’ which Linnell had asked for. It goes on to remark : ‘ I expect it will bring me a good sum one of these days, but should you desire to purchase it, of course I should not require the extent of my expectations.’

The other picture belonging to the Woodburn collection which the artist copied was a small one in oil from a long landscape by Titian, entitled ‘Samson and the Lion.’

‘St. Martin’s Lane, London,
‘February 8, 1835.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I find that in consequence of our adversary being furnished by me with a list of gentlemen that I wished to inspect the little Claude, he took advantage of the list by sending the picture round to almost all the parties. Has he sent it to you?

‘In case he should send it, you will see that it is, as I told you, a true one, but yet earlier than the one in our gallery. Now, as I am desirous of being as strong as possible, you would very much oblige me if you could prevail on Mr. Collins to see it, and in case he thought as we do, his testimony would be of great value as a landscape painter and a member of the Royal Academy.

‘At all events, the picture must be in the Court of Common Pleas, Westminster, on Tuesday morning, and I shall count on your obliging attendance.

‘We did receive a note from Mr. Collins, but I think if you tell him the circumstances of this very shameful attack on our character and purse, he will be induced to put himself to a little trouble to show his dislike to such transactions.

‘I am, my dear sir,

‘Yours very sincerely,

‘SAM. WOODBURN.’

John Linnell's family was now growing up to manhood and womanhood about him, and demanding extra thought and care on his part. In September, 1837, his eldest daughter, Hannah, was married to Mr. Samuel Palmer, the poetic landscape painter, and, as already mentioned, formerly a friend of Blake.* A few days after the wedding they set out for Italy in company with Mr. and Mrs. George Richmond, and did not return till November, 1839.

It is characteristic of Linnell's way of thinking that he gave his daughter no dowry, but commissioned her to make copies for him from the frescoes of Michael Angelo and Raphael in the galleries at Rome and Florence. He was always desirous of increasing his examples of the greatest painters, and he took the opportunity thus afforded him of at once enlarging his store, and encouraging his daughter in the art which, along with all his other children, he had so carefully taught her. The copies he thus obtained he valued very highly, as reproducing the colouring of Michael Angelo and Raphael with more truthfulness than he had yet seen them done.

The letters that Linnell wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Palmer during their sojourn in Italy are among the most interesting of his correspondence. They abound in valuable ideas and suggestions in respect to art, and incidentally throw much light upon the character and struggles of his singularly-gifted son-in-law.

* Although Mr. Palmer was a Churchman, Linnell insisted that they should be married according to the new Act of Parliament at the Registrar's Office, Marylebone, that being Mr. Palmer's parish. George Richmond and E. Calvert were the witnesses.

Mr. Palmer owed a great deal to Linnell's instruction and advice. When he was little more than a boy, our artist, admiring some of his sepia drawings, appears to have sought him out and given him the encouragement that he was ever ready to extend wherever he saw a real gift. Palmer always recognised his indebtedness in this respect, but since his death repeated efforts have been made to make it appear that he owed very little to Linnell, and that, indeed, the debt was not a little the other way. The following extract, therefore, from a letter written from Pompeii in July, 1838, is of importance. Linnell had asked him to fix a price for the coloured copies made by Mrs. Palmer from the Loggia frescoes by Raphael, and his reply was as follows :

' Though you say I understand business and life, yet business and life will never, I hope, make me forget the better feelings. I should consider a present of highly-finished drawings of the whole Vatican a poor return for what you have taught me in art—this I say quite independently of Anny's feelings on the subject.'

Again, writing from Pompeii (August, 1838), Palmer says :

' Pray send me every time any hints which may be profitable to us in our studies. Remarks of yours made months and years ago often revive in my mind as I am at work, to my no small edification.'

In a letter from Rome in January, 1838, Palmer writes :

' I hope to bring back plenty of drawings (the

foregrounds and figures of which I now take care to study betimes), but as to knowledge of manners, customs, etc., shall be as ignorant as a beast. I have not time to read much, and well-bred people, as they are called—if one fall in their way—are either too ignorant or too polite to dwell long enough on any one topic for information or instruction. The habits of desultory conversation sour me for the society of men, and make me prefer the solemn and inexhaustible eloquence of ruins and mountains.

‘I wish we could in a manner pursue more diversified studies. I get up at daylight, walk and work till it is dark, and come home tired, sleepy, and stupid. I cannot conceive how you manage to get through so much work and attend to so many things beside. I would give the world for the secret, if it is impartable. I do not tire myself with very long sittings, but keep several drawings going on at once, yet in everything but drawing seem to be daily becoming more ignorant; so I am reminded of poor Simon Brown, who wrote a letter to Queen Anne giving an account of the gradual decay and death of his mind before his body was worn out. Yet, if I can but bring home imitations of this glorious sunshine which turns rocks, trees, and ruins into amber and gold I shall not be unhappy.’

During their stay in Rome (March and April, 1838), the Palmers found very kind friends among the artists, especially in John Gibson, R.A., Penry-Williams, Mr. Dunbar (landscape-painter), etc. They used to meet at dusk and dine together at a

restaurant, and formed a circle of English artists. Mr. Dessoullary, the principal English landscape-painter in Rome, was exceedingly kind to them. He was greatly pleased with Palmer's exhibition drawing, and lent him a frame for it. With the English gentry, however, Palmer had little intercourse, and he seemed to entertain a somewhat bitter feeling towards them. Writing to Mrs. Linnell (March, 1838), he says :

'Our little piece of prosperity [a forty-guinea commission from Mr. Baring] has not made us less economical or prudent. . . . I see more [than ever] that trumpery gentility and subdandyism are the key to favour with the English at home and abroad, but do not mean to give in to it, because it makes a slovenly and scaramouch mind. I can more and more understand the reason of the shameful treatment Mr. Linnell has met with from various persons, and believe that the only way to avoid it is a sneaking compliance with silly routine, which I will never try till I am starved out of simplicity. At the same time, I wish to drop any crudenesses of behaviour which may stand in our way and prevent my keeping Anny in that comfort and competence which, for her sake, is my dearest desire.'

They found some agreeable society at Mr. Joseph Severn's, who had 'parties of one hundred people.' In April Mrs. Palmer describes a large party they were at, 'the other night,' at Mr. Severn's,* when

* One of his letters to his daughter at this time contains the following : 'Pray give my best respects and thanks to Mr. Severn for

he entertained them with some 'beautiful *tableaux vivants*.' Nevertheless, writing from Rome about this time, Palmer laments his obscure position there, and his non-acquaintance with the English gentry, owing to his not having taken any introductions with him. He is in consequence excluded from society, and has no opening for selling his drawings, etc. He writes :

' All who know us by sight know us as nobodies, and as creatures whom nobody knows, and the free terms of intercourse here make such exclusion seem the more disgraceful. I have not been introduced to a single person but Mr. Baring. As I hope soon to have something which may be worth seeing, some acquaintance with the gentry at Naples, Rome, or Florence might be of the greatest use. I should be very glad if you could think of anything which might bring it to bear. I dress as well, indeed better than I can afford, and try not to be disgusting in any way ; but there seems to be a great chasm between me and gentility—that gentility which I despise, but of which I should like to suck the sweetness, so far as the wants of a simple life require. Here we stand like two little children snubbing their noses flat at the glass of a pastrycook's window, longing not for the pastry and sweetmeats of life, but for that supply of simple wants which we cheerfully trust

his kindness to you. Tell him I had great pleasure in copying a portrait of Keats, the poet, by him.' The portrait belonged to Mr. Dewint, and was about 24 by 18 inches. Linnell copied it in 1834 for W. Empson, Esq. He afterwards made a second copy.

Providence will give us, but for the attainment of which we must use all means.

'Mr. Richmond has had the whole visiting circle of Rome open to him, and if he had been a landscape-painter would have found the advantage of it. . . .

'The world seems to have banished poverty, and to be too good for me, who am like a wart upon the neck of it. However, if I can only get a forty guinea commission now and then, I shall know how to take care of it, and be able, I trust, to go on with Anny improving ourselves in art; and if we get more, I hope I shall do good with it, and use it for the bodily, intellectual, and moral benefit of ourselves and others. Anny will do very well for society, as she has great presence of mind and carries herself well; but "I, the dogs bark at me as I walk by them," and the time is not yet for throwing my crutch at them, if I were so disposed.'

To this letter, with its tone of depression and discontent, Linnell wrote, in a letter begun on April 29, but not finished till later :

'I am very busy, and pretty successful in my pettifogging way, pleasing those most who know but little of art, but who are kind enough to employ me. I endeavour to learn contentment, notwithstanding a deep sense of professional insufficiency, because I know how much worse I should be if I sacrificed the best interests of my family for professional aggrandisement.'

'If you can make money enough without going

much out of the path which your genius and taste prompt you to pursue, consider yourself most happy and blessed. Endeavour, by pursuing this path, to obtain sufficient to preserve your independence and keep up a fair price for your works, and if you can accomplish that for a few years, and at the same time buy in stock and knowledge of the phenomena of nature and the principles and practice of art, you will be a Turner some day without turning.

*'May 16.—*Just received your letter. I am much pleased with the account you give of your proceedings. I hope Hannah will be able to complete the set of the Loggia, though some may be less finished than others. . . .

'The Exhibition [of the R.A.] is all in the first room this year, for there is nothing of first-rate interest in any others. The picture of the Exhibition, if you may judge by the number round it, is "The Queen's Counsel," by Wilkie; and the picture or pictures of the Exhibition, if you judge by what is said, are Mulready's "Seven Ages" and Turner's "Ancient and Modern Italy." I have heard many say of Mulready's, when I was standing near it, that there was no one in the world who could paint it but himself. Indeed, it appears to me to be a wonderful result of the humble and unostentatious imitation of nature, connected with pure and elevated taste and great knowledge of art. The colour also—which you know I generally assert to be much more apiece with the drawing, etc., than is usually supposed in all works of art—is here as good as any

quality in it. I have a half-length life-size of Mrs. Pendarves well placed this year; but some of the smaller ones are badly hung. . . .

'I saw Mr. Woodburn yesterday, who, I hope, will send you some useful introductions; but do not care about the exclusion you mention: it is only what you would seek were you as rich as Turner. I am told when he was in Italy he kept himself aloof from everyone, that he might have his time for study; and I assure you I think it of far more consequence that you should bring home plenty of fine studies than fine connections, or anything else fine, except fine health. There are great mistakes made upon this subject, as you remember. Let nothing tempt you to lose your time or your money to obtain more acquaintances, which often is only the means of losing more time and money. Those are the most valuable friends which are made by your exertion in art; and do not forget that the battle is to be fought at your easel. Only take care of yourself, and omit nothing that is calculated to keep your physical machine in order. If you err in this respect, you will be obliged to say that it was not for want of knowing better. Only regard what you know, and there is no doubt of success.'

In his next letter (August, 1838), Linnell wrote to Palmer:

'Mr. Severn says he shall be in England again next spring, so I hope we shall all meet in my shop, and if you behave well you shall have a stuffed duck,' etc.

The latter clause had reference to a humorous letter received from Palmer a month previously, in which he described a rare gastronomical treat he had given himself. It was dated from Pompeii (July, 1838), and is as follows :

' I bought a duck at Rome, stuffed him with three large onions, crumbs of bread, an ounce of pepper, and all his gizzards, etc., till he nearly burst ; served him up neatly (having been obliged to scold Anny to lend me a needle for the purpose), then stewed him to rags—when, on opening the pot, O the odours !! I never ate the like, except roast goose ; and as I partook of it alone, it lasted me three days. Anny laughed immoderately during the operation of stuffing him, as I knelt upon the carpet and energized ; but it is thus that inventors and those who wish to extend the boundaries of a science are always treated. It was the only fine dish I have tasted in Italy. The wretched Italians positively cut off every bit of fat before they cook the meat. After this I need say no more. I cooked my duck in a freak of despair, after Anny had disciplined me with boiled chicken every day for a fortnight. . . . '

In August the Palmers went on to Corpo di Cava, a wild mountainous country, with fine scenery such as Poussin and Titian painted. There he found the dinners delicious, and elaborated according to principles and practices he approved of. On the Sunday they took a walk over the mountains to Vietri, and came home to a sumptuous meal. In his account of the excursion, Palmer says :

'We saw some glorious things, and after dinner I felt like a bishop!'

Then comes the following rhapsody :

'As the finest morsels of nature appear with double charms after passing through the alembic of a Titian's mind, so the "good creatures" come forth blessed angels from the spits and digesters of a fine cook. This we now felt by blessed experience. Fish or flesh, which were only eatable in the vulgar Trattorias of Rome and Naples, throw now, when only just crushed by the teeth, rays of ecstasy round the palate. . . . We fare deliciously after our studies, every dinner seeming to be better studied than the last. We breathe the fresh mountain air, which, after a surfeit of boiled mutton in our "last days of Pompeii," has quite set me up. Mental exercise, mountain air, and made dishes are my recipe for health. If the mind works the mouth should water, and then everything goes on well, at least if all be weighed in the silver balances of temperance, and if the "travailed spirits" be "re-created" by a monthly goose, which is the utmost debauch I should be guilty of, were I ever so rich, for the relief of the poor and distressed, and the intellectual treasures of books, pictures, and music, bring with them a zest and a relish that were ill-exchanged for a common of geese and an ocean of turtles.'

Writing to Palmer (in August) after a visit from Mr. Collins, who had just returned from Rome, Linnell says :

'Indeed, I have lost a great deal of my compassion for you since I heard how fat you are grown. Mr. Collins says you stand now like a fixed easel, and presenting a goodly corporation. . . . Well, you are likely to come home a man of substance in some sense, I find.'

Palmer was indignant at this statement of Collins' when he heard it, and denied that there was any truth in it whatever. He writes from Corpo di Cava :

'If any man shall say that I fattened at Rome, he lies ; and if any Academician shall say so, he says "the thing that is not." I was as lank as a cub-drawn wolf, and as thin—not as a weasel—but as an *easel*. Mr. Collins's comparison of a fat man to an easel is the most unlucky I ever heard.'

Mrs. Palmer also writes to the same effect :

'As to Mr. Palmer, I can declare that at the time the Collinses were in Rome he was very thin ; indeed, Mrs. Richmond felt quite uneasy about him, and it is only just lately that he has looked thoroughly well.'

On August 23 Linnell wrote to the Palmers :

'Mr. and Mrs. Collins paid us a very friendly visit yesterday, August 22, which you will be glad to know, I am sure, as we are now upon good terms again, and I hope shall not have any more unfriendly disputes. He saw my portrait of Sir R. Peel on the easel, and praised it very much, said it was as like as possible, which is very gratifying to me, as I expected a very different criticism from him. . . .

'Lizzie is going with me on Tuesday next to drink tea with Mrs. and Miss Austin, who have just returned from Malta.'

On November 6 (1838), Linnell writes :

'I feel a doubt, from what you say about your drawings, whether you do not compose too much. I will venture to advise you to endeavour to do as much as possible, simply laying an emphasis on the beautiful, and leaving agreeable blanks or breadths where the objectionable matter comes, and if you think a foreground in one place is applicable to a sketch made in another, I would make the studies separate; but I would not try to marry them on the spot. If, however, you feel otherwise, don't mind what I have said. I only mention it as a thing I should be very careful to avoid doing on the spot, for fear of injuring the veracity of a drawing from nature.'

'I think this remark is of most consequence when you begin with a beautiful distance and middle distance; for if you start with a foreground you may venture to insert a distance from nature without so much danger of injury, as in that case you will in all probability make it sufficiently subordinate; whereas if you have elaborated a drawing of anything but a foreground and, as will be most likely, exhausted all your strength of colour, etc., in parts, it will be impossible in that drawing to make the whole true by adding a foreground; and it would be better to make a separate drawing of any foreground or figure you think may be good for it,

and afterwards in another drawing put them together.

'Take care, therefore, for though complete subjects may be more like a collection of pictures to look at and reckon upon, they will not yield so much in the long-run as separate studies. Get as many figures as possible, and if you set them near some bits of ruin, or with some landscape behind them, you are sure to make a picture by finishing your figure first, and then adding as much or as little as you please of what you see beyond, and you will be sure to have the figure and background relatively true, besides having a study applicable to other backgrounds. Let me, therefore, again say, draw figures out of doors with the background you wish as near as you can.'

On December 23, Linnell writes :

'I am very much delighted to find in your letter so good an account of my dear Hannah's improvement in the art, and I would advise you in your arrangements, when the M. Angelo and the Loggia are done, to get all the figures you can, but out of doors, if possible, in some sequestered garden, sheltered from the wind. You might even now, I should think, get figures, etc. ; and for landscape studies, or the application of figures to landscape, you should sometimes choose a light and shade which is very striking and vivid at a distance, as the figures relieve entirely by such qualities in landscapes very often, taking care that the shapes of the lights are picturesque in every part. If a face

is in shadow, let it be well lighted by reflection, and generally let the light show the action of the figure as plainly as possible.

'I think these are qualities particularly requisite in figure as introduced into landscape, and always distinguish the figures by the landscape-painter from those introduced into landscape by a figure-painter who does not paint landscape. But the treatment should depend chiefly upon the expression of your subject in effect, colour, etc., and that should rule the figures. And if you fancy a central light and soft shadows, and your landscape accords, let nothing prevent you from attempting it ; only, remember, you will not escape so easily as upon the other tack.'

'N. Poussin is a fine example of vividly constructed plans, though not always vividly painted ; Titian finer still. But you find the more difficult and more beautiful only in Raphael—sometimes in Titian and Leonardo, and in A. Dürer, and perhaps in many others which you have seen since your sojourn in Italy, but of which I am unhappily ignorant.'

'I forgot that in Giulio Romano you have both qualities—those of vividness and picturesque choice and arrangements of light seen with a poetic imagination, straining nature through his mental sieve till everything mean or vulgar was excluded. Such a mind as Giulio's seems to have taken nature into his mind as ore is taken into a kiln, where it is so digested by internal heat, that nothing but pure metal escapes into the mould intended for it.'

The following extract from a letter to Palmer, dated March 7, 1839, is very characteristic of Linnell:

'I do not,' he says, 'think it possible for anyone who thinks of Milton as Dr. Johnson thought and wrote of him, or who believes him to have been entirely wrong in his political views, thoroughly to understand or feel his poetry, because some of the grandest parts of his inspiration appear to arise from those very perceptions which most people profess to despise. It is like talking against the colouring of the greatest designers because it is not like that of the inferior draughtsmen. Those who do so, in my opinion, have no true perception of the design, or they would perceive that the colouring is a part of the same, and cannot be separated from it. . . . I very much suspect that it is our fault that we do not perceive the colouring of Raphael and M. Angelo to be equal to their other qualities of art, and as superior to [the colouring of] other inferior designers.'

On March 8 Linnell wrote :

'I long to hear that Mr. Martin has reached you in health. Pray tell him that I have only just finished the engraving of the landscape of Titian for the Royal Gallery, and that I will send him a proof the first opportunity. He will be glad, as well as you, to hear that I have sold my picture of "St. John Preaching" (which I sent to the British Gallery) to Sir Thomas Baring for 150 guineas. . . . It has been very well spoken of by the press, among whom, you know, I have

scarcely an acquaintance, so that I may feel it a compliment. . . .

'I am now and then able to devote a day to a picture or two of a similar description, and if I could prevail upon Mr. Richmond, who is entirely devoted to spiritual art, to communicate some of his discoveries, I should feel encouraged. Anyone like Mr. Richmond, leaving the Vanity Fair of Art and entering the Wicket-Gate to go to the New Jerusalem, is such a reproach to those who stay behind from whatever cause, that I would despise myself for not following him, if I did not feel that my family is an excuse which I have no right to evade. Besides, I am too old, and shall content myself now if I can be the means, any way, of assisting others to attain that excellence which craves a whole life of concentrated exertion.

'You, I feel, are in the right road to distinction, and need not care about present and immediate return so much ; for though in this age more perfection is required to obtain notice, yet at your age to have mastered so much will ensure the rest.'

Linnell's disappointment that Mr. Richmond did not communicate to him any of the impressions he had received from his studies of the highest art at Florence and Rome is referred to in another letter (March 24, 1839). He there says :

'In such a position of mind, and in such circumstances as now placed, how vivid the impressions must be of what is most important to improvement, and what valuable hints might be afforded to one

in my isolated condition! Surely had Mr. Richmond been as desirous of communicating what he believed to be his most valuable discoveries, as I have been formerly, when with you he was wont to visit the Hampstead cottage, I should have received my own with usury. I am out of the pale, I fear, too far to taste the salt of Art with such society; but I ought to remember that I was not one of the monthly-meeting *élite*—when at the platonic feast of reason and flow of soul only real Greeks from Hackney and Lisson Grove were admitted.'

The last sentence refers to a society of young men, of which Palmer and Richmond were the leading spirits, and which held monthly meetings at each other's houses to discuss poetry and art. They called themselves 'Ancients,' dressed oddly, and took for their motto 'Poetry and Sentiment.' They were all more or less Blakeites.

In April Palmer writes :

'I have undergone a course of purgation, getting a quantity of rubbish and confusion out of my mind; have found a way of carrying works on to a completion somehow or other, and have, I hope, raised and settled my taste. How happy should I be could I find time to amass sufficient knowledge of the figure to do pictures like your "St. John Preaching," which I am rejoiced to hear has been appreciated, though I think the price too low. It will be delightful and most improving to me to find you at work on similar subjects, as I wish henceforth to devote myself to poetical landscape.'

In a later communication, written shortly before returning to England, and apparently in rather a depressed state, Palmer writes :

‘ After all this struggle I may perhaps gasp out the little life that is left me pretty quietly, and find your society and conversation—which I value more than ever—an over-compensation for the stench of gas and oppression, and weight of air in the spirit-depressing, hope-crushing, energy-choking neighbourhood of London. . . . I am burning for a last desperate struggle with old Nature, and hope in a couple of months to know whether I am a wise man or a fool.’

As we know, Palmer subsequently made a considerable name as a landscape-painter.

Although Linnell and David Wilkie had been on terms of friendship ever since they were students together at the Royal Academy, no correspondence of any importance passed between them. The following letter, however, is one of two which the recipient preserved. It has reference to the permission Mr. and Mrs. Palmer desired to enable them to draw in the Sistine Chapel, it being difficult that season to get admission.

‘ Vicarage Place, Kensington,

‘ February 27, 1839.

DEAR MR. LINNELL,

‘ As you appear to think your daughter and son-in-law have not any better chance of getting their permission renewed, I have enclosed a note to Dr. Wiseman, premising that I have not much

acquaintance and no claim upon that gentleman, and cannot judge here of the difficulties that may be to overcome ; still, I have stated the case as you have stated it, as a hard one, and if Mr. and Mrs. Palmer deliver the note, it will at least do no harm.

‘ I am, dear Linnell,

‘ Most faithfully and truly yours,

‘ DAVID WILKIE.

‘ JOHN LINNELL, Esq.’

Our artist appears to have had a larger correspondence with Wilkie’s brother Thomas, who was established as a wine-merchant in the City.

CHAPTER XIV.

Engraving—William Collins's ‘Feeding the Rabbits’—John Varley’s ‘Burial of Saul’—Michael Angelo’s Studies for the Sistine Chapel—Mrs. Aders—Blake’s Style of Engraving—Amusements.

REFERENCE has already been made to Linnell’s work as an engraver ; and as his activity in this direction occupied a large portion of the earlier years of his life, it will be convenient to speak of it here. We have no exact information as to when he began to turn his attention to this branch of art ; but it must have been very soon after, if not during, his student days, since we find that in 1813—that is, when he was between eighteen and twenty years of age—he etched his own portrait of John Martin, and it is so well done that it bears comparison with anything he afterwards did.

The probability is that he very early began to etch—the art coming easily to those who know how to draw. When he had learned to etch, it would be natural for him to want to use the graver to sharpen the outlines and give finish to the engraving. And among his friends were several engravers who would be willing to give him the necessary hints for his guidance.

The first notes we possess of this period date from 1814. In this and the following years to 1819, Linnell had constant business dealings with Mr. White, engraver and printseller, of Bolsover Street, Holborn, for whom he made drawings, and from whom he had a large number of old prints after the Old Masters, and etchings and engravings by Hollar, K. Dujardin, Everdingen, Bewick, etc. Mr. White supplied him with engraving tools and materials, and laid the etching ground on the plates for him (as afterwards for Lady Mary Bennett, Linnell's pupil); he also assisted him in the biting-in process of some etchings, did the writing on some of his engraved plates, etc. Linnell, in return, executed for Mr. White a small picture of 'Fishing-Boats,' a copy in oil of Sir Joshua Reynolds' portrait of Archbishop Secker at Lambeth Palace, a drawing on stone of a bust of the Princess Charlotte, an oil copy of Mr. Gage's picture of the Duchess of Orleans, a small picture of 'A Dairy-Morning,' and a picture of 'Barges' (as a pendant to 'Fishing-Boats').

In 1815 Linnell gave Lady Mary Bennett lessons in etching, and assisted her in making etchings of views of Chillingham Park, Castle, etc. The plates number about twelve in all, and the series was not finally completed till 1818. One of the plates (No. 2) was entirely etched by him; and the others, which Lady Mary etched, he finished with the graver. Subsequently (in 1822-23) our artist gave Lady Mary lessons in miniature-painting on ivory.

At a very early date he had begun to collect

engravings and to study the methods of the different masters in the art. He never allowed the chance of acquiring a good specimen to escape him if he could help it. In this way he gradually accumulated a large and valuable collection of works by the best engravers, including etchings by Rembrandt, Claude Lorraine, and Everdingen; wood and line engravings by Albert Dürer; wood engravings by Holbein (the Bible subjects and the 'Dance of Death'); and line engravings by Marc Antonio, Bonasoni, and others. To all of these he gave a careful and diligent study. Of all these old masters his favourite was Marc Antonio, whose style, though not perhaps so poetic as that of his pupil Bonasoni, was stronger, and showed more fidelity to the picture from which he worked.

His method Linnell to some extent adopted, and may be said to have made his own. How much poetic feeling he was able, when at his best, to throw into an engraving may be seen in his reproduction of William Collins's 'Feeding the Rabbits,' executed in 1831. This, however, is in mezzotint. This was his latest and favourite method, although he did many fine works in etching pure and simple, as well as in simple line engraving. In his mezzotints he worked for the same effects of breadth and light that he admired so much in the engravings of Marc Antonio. He avoided the smoky sootiness of many modern mezzotints by etching the outline first, then putting in the mezzotint, and sometimes finishing off with the graver.

It was not until 1831 that our artist first undertook to engrave a plate in mezzotint. He obtained in an hour or so all the information he needed to enable him to proceed with the work from a Mr. Egan, a mezzotint ground-layer, etc. Mr. Egan supplied him with the necessary tools, and explained how they were to be used. Linnell also employed him to lay some of his first mezzotint grounds. This was all the instruction he ever had in this art.

Among his many excellent mezzotint engravings are the reproduction of John Varley's 'Saul,' the figures of which he had painted for his friend twelve years before, and his engravings of his own portraits of Mr. Bray, Archbishop Whateley, the Bishop of Chichester, Mr. Leifchild, etc. But perhaps the best known of all his works of this description are his mezzotints after Michael Angelo, referred to by Mr. Ruskin in his 'Modern Painters.' These engravings are from drawings which are thought to be Michael Angelo's original working studies for the Sistine Chapel. Some, however, attribute them to Vassari.

Mulready was of this opinion. But our artist thought that they were by Michael Angelo. They had at one time belonged to Sir Peter Lely, and afterwards to Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose stamps they have impressed upon them. They were subsequently purchased by Thomas Rogers, the poet. The latter lent them to Callcott, and it was at his house that Linnell first saw them; he then admired them so much that Rogers, on being asked, lent

them to him to engrave. Linnell afterwards bought them for much less than their real value at the sale of Rogers' effects. They were mezzotinted to imitate the bistre drawings.

Writing from Rome (January, 1838) about these prints, a set of which her father had commissioned her to colour for him, Mrs. Palmer says :

' I have got my permission to draw in the Sistine, and have finished ten of the prints, which, to my great joy, look like the originals. They look like drawings, they are so exactly like, with a few exceptions in light and shade and form. Indeed, I think a set really well coloured would be quite a little Sistine Chapel. I find the darker ones colour the best, for when the colour is washed over the faint ones it obscures the making out too much, so that it takes me longer than the others, as I have to make them out again. However, I do four a day. It is a great delight. I should not have seen half the beauty of them if I had not copied them.'

In the same letter Samuel Palmer writes :

' I have been for the first time to the Sistine Chapel, and my expectations, raised to the very highest, were fully realized. I was surprised at the breadth of the lights and the tenderness with which the strongest muscles are effectually expressed, though, of course, I did not think they were cut up like [they are in] the small prints of Mantuanus. The moment I saw them I was convinced that your prints are the only copies which give their general character and effect, and I have compared some of

them with the originals in the chapel. . . . Anny has quite got the general effect of the M. Angelos, and I think it will be a most interesting book.'

Palmer adds that he has shown Linnell's Michael Angelos to Mr. J. Gibson, R.A., and to Mr. Severn, 'who has some of the first numbers.'

It was a marked feature of Linnell's genius, both in painting and engraving, that he made himself master of every method, and in his work he resorted to the means which seemed to him best calculated to produce the effect he sought. In etching, one of his best plates is that of his landscape 'Mid-day,' painted at Winkfield in 1818. It is a remarkably fine piece of work, and is almost the only etching of one of his own pictures he ever executed.

A no less beautiful work is his engraving of one wing of the triptych by Hubert and Jan van Eyck of 'The Adoration of the Lamb,' in the church of St. Bevans, Ghent. It is like a bit of one of the Old Masters, and was executed in 1826 for Mrs. Aders, for whom Linnell did other work at this time. Mrs. Aders was the wife of a wealthy German merchant, whose house in Euston Square was always open to artists and literary people. Linnell was a frequent guest. Here, among other famous men, he used to meet Coleridge, Lamb, Flaxman, Crabb Robinson, and others. One of his most vivid recollections of those days was of hearing Crabb Robinson recite Blake's poem, 'The Tiger,' before a distinguished company gathered round Mr. Aders' table. It was a most impressive performance, and Linnell, catch-

ing the spirit of it, used to recite the poem as he had heard it done with great effect.

Mrs. Aders was a woman of great æsthetic taste, marked character and intelligence, and she appears to have been as comely as she was accomplished. Being the daughter of a painter and engraver, too, she was not only sufficiently gifted in the handling of the brush to be able to execute clever copies of the Old Masters, but was equally facile with the graver also, as some existing engravings testify—notably, one of herself, from a portrait by our artist, who about the same time painted one of Mr. Aders. The picture of the lady is in the antique style, and represents her as the Muse of Harmony. Judged from the engraving, she must have been a beautiful woman, and well qualified to inspire the poem—‘The Two Founts’—addressed to her by Coleridge on the occasion of her recovery, ‘with undiminished looks, from a severe attack of pain.’

Blake was also a frequent guest of the Aders, and it was under their roof that Mr. Crabb Robinson first met him in company with Linnell. To that circumstance we owe so many valuable reminiscences of the poet-painter. This meeting took place on December 10, 1825, as Robinson relates in his ‘Reminiscences.’ Like others who came under the influence of Mrs. Aders, Blake greatly admired her, and spoke highly of her artistic efforts. She was equally gifted as a musician, and so charmed her guests alike by her conversation and her harmony.

By his thorough mastery of the art of engraving,

Linnell was enabled to aid Blake greatly in the improvement of his method, which had become hard and severe, albeit very correct, and left much to be desired in regard to the expression of poetic feeling. He would seem to have adopted this method—very different from his earlier one as exhibited in his engravings for Young's 'Night Thoughts'—to try to please the print-sellers, with whom Bartolozzi and his school were then the prime favourites. His style at this time is best exemplified by his engraving of the 'Canterbury Pilgrims,' in which the lights are covered down by cross-lines and dots.

Linnell directed his attention to the superior qualities of Marc Antonio and Bonasoni, as well as of some others of the great Old Masters of engraving, with whom Blake does not appear to have been previously acquainted. He at once perceived that their style gave greater scope for the expression of poetic feeling and aerial effect. He was in particular struck with the work of Marc Antonio and Bonasoni, the contemporaries of Raphael and Michael Angelo, and to some extent moulded his subsequent style on theirs.

Gilchrist, in his 'Life of Blake,' speaking of the 'Inventions to Job,' says: 'Blake's manner of handling the graver had been advantageously modified since his acquaintance with Mr. Linnell. The latter had called his attention to the works of Albert Dürer, Marc Antonio, and the Italian's contemporary and disciple, Bonasoni, who, though he did not draw so well as his master, was more prolific

in invention. From Bonasoni especially Blake gleaned much, and was led, on first becoming familiar with his work, to express a regret that he had been trained in the Basire school, where he had learned to work as an engraver merely, cross-hatching freely. He now became an artist, making every line tell. The results of this change of style are manifest in the engraved "Inventions to Job."

Gilchrist appears to have fallen into an error here. Blake's work was always artistic; much of his earlier work being quite as much so as his later. But change of fashion, and his dependence upon the printsellers, made him adopt the style which he finally relinquished for that exemplified in the 'Inventions to Job.'

These plates to the Book of Job are undoubtedly the best Blake ever did, and they show in a marked manner the influence of the Italian engravers, no more lines being put in than are necessary to express the form and shadow, and the whole being left broad and with the full effect of light. The same qualities we see in all Linnell's own best engraved work.

For many years Linnell used the graver and the etching tools along with the brush. Busy all day while the light lasted on his canvases, or with his miniatures, he used to turn the evenings to account for engraving. It was ever his principle to take his rest by changing his occupation; and this he carried to such an extent that he seldom had an idle hour. Not that he never had recourse to amusements of any kind. He still went occasionally to the theatre

and the opera when there was anything good to be seen—especially any play of Shakespeare's—sometimes taking Blake with him. They were both equally ardent admirers of a good play or opera, as of a good picture ; and when there were pictures to be seen they went likewise together to see them.

It was the marvel of his family, and of all who knew him, how Linnell could work as he did, and how, moreover, while he was doing such careful work in engraving, he could at the same time listen to a book which was being read to him by one of his sons or daughters, and follow the sense so closely that he at once detected the mispronunciation of a word or any other mistake in reading.

CHAPTER XV.

Blake's Last Days—The 'Inventions' to the Book of Job—Illustrations to Dante—Letters from Blake—Visits to Hampstead—Death of Blake—Tatham—Allan Cunningham—Linnell's Opinion of Blake.

WHILE Blake was still engaged on the engravings to 'Job,' Linnell directed his friend's attention to Dante's 'Divina Commedia,' which was a favourite book of his, and one which he considered Blake's genius peculiarly suited to illustrate. He therefore suggested a series of designs, or 'Inventions,' as Blake would call them, for the work of the great Florentine. Blake was pleased with the idea, and at once accepted his generous friend's commission.

The way it came about was this. Although the 'Job' had been paid for, Linnell continued to give him money weekly. Blake said: 'I do not know how I shall ever repay you.' Linnell replied: 'I do not want you to repay me. I am only too glad to be able to serve you. What I would like, however, if you do anything for me, is that you should make some designs for Dante's Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso.'

Blake entered upon the work with alacrity, starting, at the age of sixty-seven, to study Italian, in





WILLIAM BLAKE.

(From a pencil drawing by John Linnell.)

order to be able to understand the 'Divina Commedia' in the original text. In a few weeks' time he knew enough of the language to be able to go to work. The agreement between the two was to the effect that Blake was to proceed with the designs, doing as much or as little as he liked, and that Linnell was to go on paying him, as heretofore, two or three pounds a week, according to his needs, until they were finished. The work went on at first concurrently with the engraving of the 'Job' designs, and the two together occupied the old man for the remainder of his life.

For the purpose of the designs Linnell gave Blake a folio volume of fine Dutch paper, containing a hundred leaves, and the designs he made number just a hundred. They are in water-colours, and cover the entire page. While many of them are finished, others are the reverse, some few presenting little more than the merest outline. The first draft of the whole, or nearly the whole, was made while Blake was in bed with a bad foot. Propped up with pillows, and holding the book before him, he was able to sketch the designs in outline; whereas he could not work on his plates of 'Job.'

Linnell gave his friend the commission in 1825, and through that year and 1826 Blake was more or less busy upon the designs. On November 10 in the former year, Blake wrote to Linnell (at Cirencester Place, Fitzroy Square) from Fountain Court, Strand, whither he had in the meantime gone to

live, the following letter, which has reference to the plates of the ‘Job,’ to which he was putting the final touches :

‘ DEAR SIR,

‘ I have, I believe, done nearly all that we agreed on. And if you should put on your considering-cap, just as you did last time we met, I have no doubt the plates would be all the better for it. I cannot get well, and am now in bed, but seem as if I should be better to-morrow. Rest does me good. Pray take care of your health this wet weather; and, though I write, do not venture out on such days as to-day has been. I hope a few days more will bring us to a conclusion.

‘ I am, dear sir,

‘ Yours sincerely,

‘ WILLIAM BLAKE.’

Another very characteristic letter of Blake’s to Linnell is dated ‘ February 1, 1826’:

‘ DEAR SIR,

‘ I am forced to write, because I cannot come to you. And this on two accounts. First, I omitted to desire you would come to take a mutton-chop with us the day you go to Cheltenham, and I will go with you to the coach. Also, I will go to Hampstead to see Mrs. Linnell on Sunday, but will return before dinner (I mean, if you set off before that). And second, I wish to have a copy of “Job” to show to Mr. Chantrey.

‘For I am again laid up by a cold in my stomach. The Hampstead air, as it always did, so I fear it will do this time, except it be the morning air ; and that, in my cousin’s time, I found I could bear with safety, and perhaps benefit. I believe my constitution to be a good one, but it has many peculiarities that no one but myself can know. When I was young, Hampstead, Highgate, Hornsey, Muswell Hill, and even Islington, and all places north of London, always laid me up the day after, and sometimes two or three days, with precisely the same complaint, and the same torment of the stomach ; easily removed, but excruciating while it lasts, and enfeebling for some time after. Sir Francis Bacon would say it is want of discipline in mountainous places. Sir Francis Bacon is a liar ; no discipline will turn one man into another, even in the least particle ; and such discipline I call presumption and folly. I have tried it too much not to know this, and am very sorry for all those who may be led to such ostentatious exertions against their eternal existence itself ; because it is a mental rebellion against the Holy Spirit, and fit only for a soldier of Satan to perform.

‘Though I hope in a morning or two to call on you in Cirencester Place, I feared you might be gone, or I might be too ill to let you know how I am and what I wish.

‘I am, dear sir,

‘Yours sincerely,

‘WM. BLAKE.’

The following letter is undated, but it probably belongs to the end of the year 1825 or to the beginning of 1826 :

Tuesday night.

‘ DEAR SIR,

‘ I return you thanks for the two pounds you now send me. As to Sir Thomas Lawrence, I have not heard from him as yet, and hope that he has a good opinion of my willingness to appear grateful, though not able, on account of this abominableague, or whatever it is. I am in bed, and at work. My health I cannot speak of, for if it was not for the cold weather I think I should soon get about again. Great men die equally with the little. I am sorry for Ld. Ls.—he is a man of very singular abilities—as also for the D. of C. ; but, perhaps—and I verily believe it—every death is an improvement of the state of the departed. I can draw as well in bed as up, and perhaps better; but I cannot engrave. I am going on with Dante, and please myself.

‘ I am, dear sir,

‘ Yours sincerely,

‘ WILLIAM BLAKE.’

Blake’s health continued disquieting during the spring of 1826, and Linnell suggested that he should go for a time to Hampstead, believing the change of air would do him good, and proposed to take lodgings for him at Hope Cottage, where he had lodged before he went to Collins’ Farm. The following letters refer to this proposal :

'July 2, 1826.

' MY DEAREST FRIEND,

' This sudden cold weather has cut up all my hopes by the roots. Everyone who knows of our intended flight into your delightful country concurs in saying, Do not venture till summer appears again. I also feel myself weaker than I was aware, being not able as yet to sit up longer than six hours at a time; and also feel the cold too much to dare venture beyond my present precincts. My heartiest thanks for your care in my accommodation, and the trouble you will yet have with me. But I get better and stronger every day, though weaker in muscle and bone than I supposed. As to pleasantness of prospect, it is all pleasant prospect at North End. Mrs. Hard's I should like as well as any; but think of the expense, and how it may be spared, and never mind appearances.

' I intend to bring with me, besides our necessary change of apparel, only my book of drawings from Dante, and one plate shut up in the book. All will go very well in the coach, which at present would be a rumble I fear I could not go through. So that I conclude another week must pass before I dare venture upon what I ardently desire—the seeing you with your happy family once again, and that for a longer period than I had ever hoped in my healthful hours.

' I am, dear sir,

' Yours most gratefully,

' WILLIAM BLAKE.'

'July 5, 1826.

DEAR SIR,

'I thank you for the receipt of five pounds this morning, and congratulate you on the receipt of another fine boy. Am glad to hear of Mrs. Linnell's health and safety.

'I am getting better every hour. My plan is diet only; and, if the machine is capable of it, shall make an old man yet. I go on just as if perfectly well, which indeed I am, except in those paroxysms, which I now believe will never more return. Pray let your own health and convenience put all solicitude concerning me at rest. You have a family, I have none; there is no comparison between our necessary avocations.

'Believe me to be, dear sir,

'Yours sincerely,

'WILLIAM BLAKE.'

'July 16, 1826.

DEAR SIR,

'I have been, ever since taking Dr. Young's addition to Mr. Fincham's practice with me (the addition is dandelion), in a species of delirium, and in pain too much for thought. It is now past, as I hope. But the moment I got ease of body began pain of mind, and that not a small one. It is about the name of the child, which certainly ought to be Thomas, after Mrs. Linnell's father. It will be brutal, not to say worse, for it is worse, in my opinion and on my part. Pray reconsider it, if it is not too

late. It very much troubles me as a crime in which I shall be the principal. Pray excuse this hearty expostulation, and believe me to be,

‘Yours sincerely,

‘WILLIAM BLAKE.’

The boy referred to in the two preceding letters was the artist’s third son and fifth child, who, despite Blake’s objection, was named William after him, and has a recollection of being once seated upon the old man’s knee. After Hannah, born in Rathbone Place in 1818, came Elizabeth, John and James, all of whom first saw the light in Cirencester Place. William (born July 3, 1826) was, according to astrological Varley, destined to be of an ardent and impulsive disposition, because the constellation Taurus was in the ascendant at the time of his birth.

‘August 1, 1826.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘If this notice should be too short for your convenience, please to let me know. But, finding myself well enough to come, I propose to set out from here as soon after ten as we can on Thursday morning. Our carriage will be a cabriolet. For, though getting better and stronger, I am still incapable of riding in the stage, and shall be, I fear, for some time, being only bones and sinews, all strings and bobbins, like a weaver’s loom. Walking to and from the stage would be to me impossible, though I seem well, being entirely free from both

pain and from that sickness to which there is no name. Thank God, I feel no more of it, and have great hopes that the disease is gone.

‘I am, dear sir,

‘Yours sincerely,

‘WILLIAM BLAKE.’

Though the sojourn at Hampstead was made, Blake did not receive much benefit from it. He was, indeed, gradually getting weaker and weaker. In all probability his residence in such close proximity to the river was injurious to his health. Linnell, feeling that a removal to more wholesome quarters would do him good, proposed that he should live at his house in Cirencester Place, only part of which he used as his studio. The following letter, of date February, 1827, has reference to this proposition :

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I thank you for the five pounds received to-day. Am getting better every morning; but slowly, as I am still feeble and tottering, though all the symptoms of my complaint seem almost gone, as the fine weather is very beneficial and comfortable to me. I go on, as I think, improving my engravings of Dante more and more, and shall soon get proofs of these four which I have; and beg the favour of you to send me the two plates of Dante which you have, that I may finish them sufficiently to make some show of colour and strength.

‘I have thought and thought of the removal, and

cannot get my mind out of a state of terrible fear at such a step. The more I think the more I feel terror at what I wished at first, and thought it a thing of benefit and good. Hope you will attribute it to its right cause—intellectual peculiarity that must be myself alone shut up in myself, or reduced to nothing. I could tell you of visions and dreams upon the subject. I have asked and entreated divine help; but fear continues upon me, and I must relinquish the step that I had wished to take, and still wish, but in vain.

‘Your success in your profession is, above all things to me, most gratifying. May it go on to the perfection you wish, and more! So wishes also,

‘Yours sincerely,

‘WILLIAM BLAKE.’

Another letter, dated March 15, 1827, refers to the circumstance that Mr. Cumberland was going to take a copy of ‘Job,’ but thought it too overlaboured for his Bristol friends; also, to the fact that Mr. Tatham, senior, had called and looked over the Dante, and was ‘very much pleased with the designs, as well as the engravings.’ The next letter—of date April 25, 1827—shows Blake, though continually ill, still working at the Dante:

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I am going on better every day, as I think, both in health and in work. I thank you for the ten pounds which I received from you this day, which shall be put to the best use; as also for the

prospect of Mr. Ottley's advantageous acquaintance. I go on without daring to consider futurity, which I cannot do without doubt and fear that ruin activity, and are the greatest hurt to an artist such as I am. As to "Ugolino," etc., I never supposed that I should sell them. My wife alone is answerable for their having existed in any finished state. I am too much attached to Dante to think much of anything else. I have proved the six plates, and reduced the fighting devils ready for the copper. I count myself sufficiently paid if I live as I now do, and only fear that I may be unlucky to my friends, and especially that I may be so to you.

'I am, sincerely yours,
WILLIAM BLAKE.'

Three months later Linnell received another letter, the last he ever had from his friend :

'July 3, 1827.

'DEAR SIR,

'I thank you for the ten pounds you are so kind as to send me at this time. My journey to Hampstead on Sunday brought on a relapse which has lasted till now. I find I am not so well as I thought; I must not go on in a youthful style. However, I am upon the mending hand to-day, and hope soon to look as I did, for I have been yellow, accompanied by all the old symptoms.

'I am, dear sir,
'Yours sincerely,
WILLIAM BLAKE.'

Six weeks later, on August 12, Blake died. Up to the last he worked at the *Dante*, leaving some of the designs, as has been said, in an imperfect state. After her husband's death Mrs. Blake sent the book containing the designs to Mr. Linnell with a note, saying that, as he had paid for them, they were his.

Subsequently Mr. Frederick Tatham, already referred to as one of the enthusiastic disciples of Blake, and the one who prevailed upon the widow to give up to him all her late husband's poetic and artistic effects, wrote to Linnell, demanding the return to him of the *Dante* designs. Fortified by his written agreement with Blake, however, he paid no attention to the demand; and well was it that he did so, for had they fallen into Tatham's hands they would doubtless have gone the way of all the other 'Remains' that fell—apparently improperly—into his possession. For having come under the influence of the Irvingites and been made an 'Angel,' or something of the sort, in that body, he was persuaded that his late friend's designs and poetic effusions were of the devil, and incontinently burned or otherwise destroyed them.

Tatham declared, and Gilchrist affirms in his '*Life of William Blake*,' that Mrs. Blake bequeathed 'the remaining stock of his works, still considerable,' to Mr. Tatham. But, against this statement in his copy of the '*Life*,' Linnell wrote an emphatic 'No.' Whatever may have been the artist's authority for his belief, it is certain that he would not

have contradicted such a statement without good grounds for so doing.*

He undoubtedly had very good reason to be indignant with a man who, while pretending to be a devoted admirer and disciple of Blake, had so little appreciation of his works that what he did not destroy he allowed to be scattered. How different to Linnell himself, who never permitted a scrap of anything that bore the impress of Blake's hand to be wasted !

After her husband's death Mrs. Blake went to live in Linnell's house in Cirencester Place, in which it had been his intention to let Blake reside if he had lived. It was a large house, and our artist only used a part of it as his studio. From about a month after Blake's death until Linnell let the house—that is, a period of nine or ten months—his widow continued to reside there. She survived her husband about four years, dying in October, 1831. It is pleasing to know that she did not want for anything. In addition to the assistance she received from later friends, some of their older ones turned up again, and either bought or helped to find purchasers for some of Blake's still-remaining works. Amongst other purchasers of his works was Mr. Haviland Burke, a nephew (or grand-nephew) of Edmund Burke, who, hearing of Blake's death, called upon our artist to ask if any of his works were still procurable. Linnell directed him to go and see Mrs.

* Tatham never showed anything in proof of his assertion that all was left to him, but only gave his word for it.

Blake, and was the means of her not only selling several works to Mr. Burke himself, but of her disposing of a copy of the 'Songs of Innocence and Experience,' two prints of Job and Ezekiel, and two



WILLIAM BLAKE.

(From a sketch by John Linnell.)

drawings to Dr. Jebb, Bishop of Limerick. Gilchrist is in error in what he says on this subject, as well as in many others in regard to Blake. He says the Bishop sent her twenty guineas, saying that as he was not a collector of works of art, he did not desire

anything in return. The fact is that Mr. Burke was commissioned to examine what works were left, and to select something that he thought he would like. He chose the '*Songs of Innocence and Experience*', and the prints and drawings, and on the works being sent to him he forwarded the twenty guineas.

Amongst the old friends who again sought Mrs. Blake out was Lord Egremont, who purchased for eighty guineas a large water-colour drawing, representing the characters of Spenser's '*Faerie Queen*', designed as a companion picture to the '*Canterbury Pilgrims*'. The Earl was in a disposition to aid the widow of his old friend by making further purchases, and Linnell did his best to take advantage of the inclination, as the following letter will show. It is valuable also as indicating his attitude in regard to the works of his dead friend.

' Mr. J. Linnell begs leave to enclose to the Earl of Egremont a work by the late Mr. Blake for his lordship's inspection, and will send again to know if his lordship wishes to possess it.

' Mr. Linnell was intimately acquainted with the author, and was his employer in the above work when he had nothing else to do. Mr. Linnell's means were not adequate to pay Mr. Blake according to his merit, or such a work should have placed him in moderate independence. The work, however, has not yet paid its expenses, although highly esteemed and in the collections of the best judges.

' Mr. Linnell begs permission also to mention that

he has in his possession about one hundred original designs by Mr. Blake on a larger scale, forming a complete illustration to the whole of Dante.

'Many are in an unfinished state, but the greater number are, and are more powerfully coloured and finished than he usually did. They were done for Mr. Linnell in return for moneys advanced to Mr. Blake when he had no other resources. The sum, however, was inconsiderable, compared to the value of the drawings; and Mr. Linnell's object being only to relieve the necessities of his friend as far as he was able, he is now willing to part with the drawings for the benefit of the widow, and if he can obtain a price something more adequate, he will engage to hand over the difference to Mrs. Blake.'

'Mr. Linnell begs leave, therefore, to be allowed to show the drawings to Lord Egremont, and will wait upon his lordship with them, or be at home, at any time appointed.'

'Porchester Terrace,
'Bayswater,'

The Dante drawings still remain in the possession of the Linnell family, and form a magnificent monument of Blake's last days.

About two years after Blake's death Allan Cunningham, the first biographer of Blake, wrote to Linnell, asking him for materials for his projected 'Life.' Although, as he says, he obtained much information from John Varley, yet both he and the biographers

who came later were chiefly indebted to our artist for what they were enabled to tell us of the poet-artist's later life. Cunningham's letter was as follows :

‘ 27, Lower Belgrave Place,
‘ July 20, 1829.

‘ SIR,

‘ I have published one volume of the “ Lives of the Eminent British Painters,” and I have another in progress. The first contains the lives of Hogarth, Wilson, Reynolds, and Gainsborough, and the second will contain amongst others West, Barry, Fuseli, Opie, and Blake, if I can find suitable materials. Mr. Varley, from whom I have received much valuable information, tells me that you can aid me much in the matter. I write, therefore, to request that you will have the goodness to inform me of a few of the leading circumstances of Blake's life, give me a list of his works, and oblige me with the loan of the illustrations of “ Job.” I know Blake's character, for I knew the man. I shall make a *judicious* use of my materials, and be merciful where sympathy is needed.

‘ I ought to offer many apologies for this intrusion and trouble. I know enough of you to know that you are an admirer of the artist, and as a matter of love will assist one who honours his genius and esteems his memory as a man.

‘ I remain, dear sir,

‘ Very truly yours,

‘ ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.’

As all that Linnell had to say about his friend, and in some respects we might almost say his master, has a certain importance, considering the opportunities he had of knowing him, the following final judgment upon the effect of Blake's views, written nearly thirty years after his death, must have a special interest to those who have made a study of Blake and his works. It was found amongst Linnell's literary remains, and was dated 1855: 'A saint amongst the infidels, and a heretic with the orthodox. With all the admiration (possible) for Blake, it must be confessed that he said many things tending to the corruption of Christian morals, even when unprovoked by controversy, and when opposed by the superstitious, the crafty, or the proud, he outraged all common-sense and rationality by the opinions he advanced, occasionally even indulging in the support of the most lax interpretation of the precepts of the Scriptures.'

CHAPTER XVI.

Removal to Bayswater—Linnell and Fashionable Portrait-painting—
Landscape Art—Home Life and Home Labours—Engraving—
Shoreham—Mr. Sheepshanks.

IN April, 1828, Linnell removed from Hampstead to Bayswater, at the same time vacating the house which he had kept on as a studio in Cirencester Place. He at first lived at 26, Porchester Terrace, but afterwards he built a house for himself on land leased from the Bishop of London. Into this house—numbered 38—he went to live in 1830. He subsequently added to his lease a plot of land adjoining his house to the south, upon which he built himself a larger studio—or ‘workshop,’ as he preferred to call it—than the one he had hitherto worked in in the house. He superintended the building operations himself, arranging with, and employing, the various workmen—bricklayers, carpenters, labourers, etc.—and paying all of them their wages on the Saturday night. The land was leased and the work begun in 1836. The studio was sufficiently finished for him to enter it in the early part of 1837. It was fifty feet long by twenty wide, and was provided with three skylights. Here he

used now to paint his portraits with a light from above (as in the case of the portrait of Thomas Carlyle, which was painted in this room).

Later still he rented an additional piece of ground to the west of his garden, which gave him an opening to the fields between Porchester Terrace and Black Lion Lane, now Queen's Road. He took great delight in his garden, and was wont to find health and recreation in attending to it. A large proportion of the work required in it was done by his own hands. He sowed and planted it, pruned his trees and mowed his grass, and saw to his fowls and bees, with but little assistance save that given by his sons. Sometimes, when he could spare the time, he would devote the entire day to gardening. The effect of these labours on his constitution was very beneficial, and he gradually increased both in health and strength.

He would probably have said that this result was attained not only in part through the economy of strength effected by having no longer to toil to and from Hampstead night and morning, but in part through the pure water with which he was able to supply his household by digging a couple of wells in his garden. It may be imagined that he sunk them at considerable monetary cost; but such was ever his 'rage' for the real, unadulterated thing, whether in art or religion, in comestibles or the raw material of his craft, that he never spared either trouble or cost in striving towards his end. The 'fountain-head' was his aim; and when he had sunk one well

and found the water satisfactory but not sufficient, he presently went to work and sunk another.*

It is noteworthy in regard to this removal from Hampstead to Bayswater, that Linnell seems to have become possessed of a similar feeling in regard to the former place to that entertained for the North generally by Blake, as the following lines show :

‘ “ Of all the airts the wind can blaw, I dearly loe the west,”
Is the first line of the old Scotch song ; I suppose you know
the rest.

It is quoted here only to show
The way when I travel I like to go,
To get a good healthy breezy blow.

‘ So if with fresh air your lungs you’d fill,
’Tis better to go to Richmond Hill,
That place where lived a lass,
Than to Hampstead where
The dust fills the air,
Kicked up by many an ass.

‘ You can ride from your door,
And it costs no more ;
Nay, I think it costs much less ;
And if it should rain,
You can ride back again,
And so get out of the mess.’

One of the first results of his removal to Bayswater was a diminution in Linnell’s portrait commissions. Cirencester Place was near the Squares of Bloomsbury, which then formed the fashionable part of the town, while Porchester Terrace was a comparatively unknown place, in a district of open fields and eligible building land, upon which the eyes of the speculative builder were just then being turned.

* As he had nothing to pay for water-rates ever afterwards, the money spent in sinking the wells proved a good investment.

But in the course of a year or two his commissions became as numerous as ever, while his prices were considerably improved. He was now getting fairly good prices for those days, and was gradually establishing for himself a high reputation as a portrait-painter. Every year he had two or three portraits in the Royal Academy ; and if he does not compare well with some of the more fashionable portrait-painters of his day in the number of celebrities he painted (albeit his list is a very good one), he will stand comparison with the best of them for the excellence of his work. One has only to look at his portraits of Blake, of his father-in-law, Thomas Palmer, of Sir A. W. Callcott, R.A., of Edward Sterling and Archbishop Whately, not to mention a score others of well-known men, to see that he reached the high-water mark of portraiture. His portrait of Callcott (now in the possession of Mr. J. C. Horsley, R.A.) could not easily be excelled for life-like expression and ease of treatment.

Linnell always held, and one cannot help thinking, in the light of subsequent facts, that he was right, that his religious views and democratic opinions stood in the way of his preferment, not only in regard to the Royal Academy, but as a professional portrait-painter. As he often said, he was too independent, too uncompromising, for a courtier, and without something of that it is hard—or was in the earlier part of the century, at all events—to make headway in Court and fashionable circles.

He showed his indomitable resolution not to bend

the knee or submit to any system of currying favour, when it was a question of his election to the Associateship of the Royal Academy ; and the same spirit was manifest in all he did. We have seen the attitude he took when he thought he might be commissioned to paint the portrait of George IV. If asked to execute a likeness, whatever the consequences might be, he avowed it should be 'like.' No untruthfulness for him—not even to flatter his King. In his autobiographical notes he remarks that 'had he been content to be reckoned a son of Pharaoh's daughter, he might have flourished as a Court painter.' But he was not prepared to make the sacrifice that would have been required of him so to thrive.

Apart from the fact that he always conceived his strength to be in the painting of poetic landscape, and constantly looked forward to the day when he should be able to return to his first love, he felt that there was something approaching degradation in painting pictures of men and women, and calling them portraits, when all the salient points of likeness and character had been softened to the point of effeminacy. He might possibly have afforded to be less uncompromising and lost nothing ; and yet one cannot help in these days, when it is the fashion to hold all things lightly, and to regard those who hold their convictions too earnestly with a pitying cynicism—one cannot help admiring the man who, in his profession as in his religion, was resolved at all hazards to be true to himself and steadfast to the faith that was in him.

Had there been less of this sincerity and truth to himself in John Linnell, we may be sure that his gift to his generation would have been of far less value than it was. He might have painted beautiful landscape, but it would not have been what it was—a landscape that maintained the best tradition of the early English School, and, at the same time, added to it something of the grandeur for which the Old Masters are celebrated. For, high as was his reputation during the middle period of his life for portrait-painting, he never got beyond the feeling that he painted portraits to live, while landscape he lived to paint. Such was his attitude towards the two branches of his art. Even in portrait-painting he made his work subserve the greater aim ; for by his care in painting flesh and human expression, he held that he learned to paint individual nature with more force and fidelity.

It is difficult to convey to the reader how deep was the trait in Linnell's character which urged him on to arrive at the essential truth of things. In some respects it amounted to an idiosyncrasy, as such traits are apt to do, and led him to do some things which have their humorous as well as their practical side. His motto was to do everything himself if he could possibly manage it, and if not, to see it done, or as much of it as possible.

Thus his children, who were now growing up into sturdy boys and girls, found in him their chief instructor. He, with the assistance of Mrs. Linnell, not only guided them in the acquisition of the rudi-

ments of education, but at an early age began to drill them in art. The house was workshop, school, academy—one might almost add, at a later period, college of divinity into the bargain. There was no idle time under our artist's roof. The boys had ever their work to do, and if it was not studying drawing, it was gardening, grinding corn, helping to make the family bread, or, it may be, lending a hand in the brewing of the household beer when the time came round for that operation to be performed; for to the labour of bread-making, commenced at Cirencester Place, and taken up again at Porchester Terrace, was now added that of brewing.

The stimulating cause was the same in both cases—namely, the desire to have everything genuine, and of the best quality. To nothing did Linnell give more care and attention than to his brewing, which, though he employed a competent man to do the practical part of the work, he always superintended himself, taking especial care to see to the employment of a proper quantity of hops, and to the working of the liquor after the brewing. Thus he always had a plentiful supply of genuine ale, which he continued to drink until extreme old age, when his medical man advised him to give it up. It was a good brew, and gave general satisfaction to all who partook of it. Later, when the dealers began to pay him visits, and they were treated at his table to a taste of his ale, as well as of his theology, he used to tell in his humorous way how they preferred the former to the latter.

An amusing anecdote is related illustrative of Linnell's unquenchable desire always to have the real Simon Pure article, and to have likewise his money's worth. On one occasion, the servant not being about, he went to the door himself to receive the morning milk. Taking a jug in each hand, he quietly asked the milkman to let him have the milk in one jug and the water in the other, at the same time saying that he would pay for them separately.

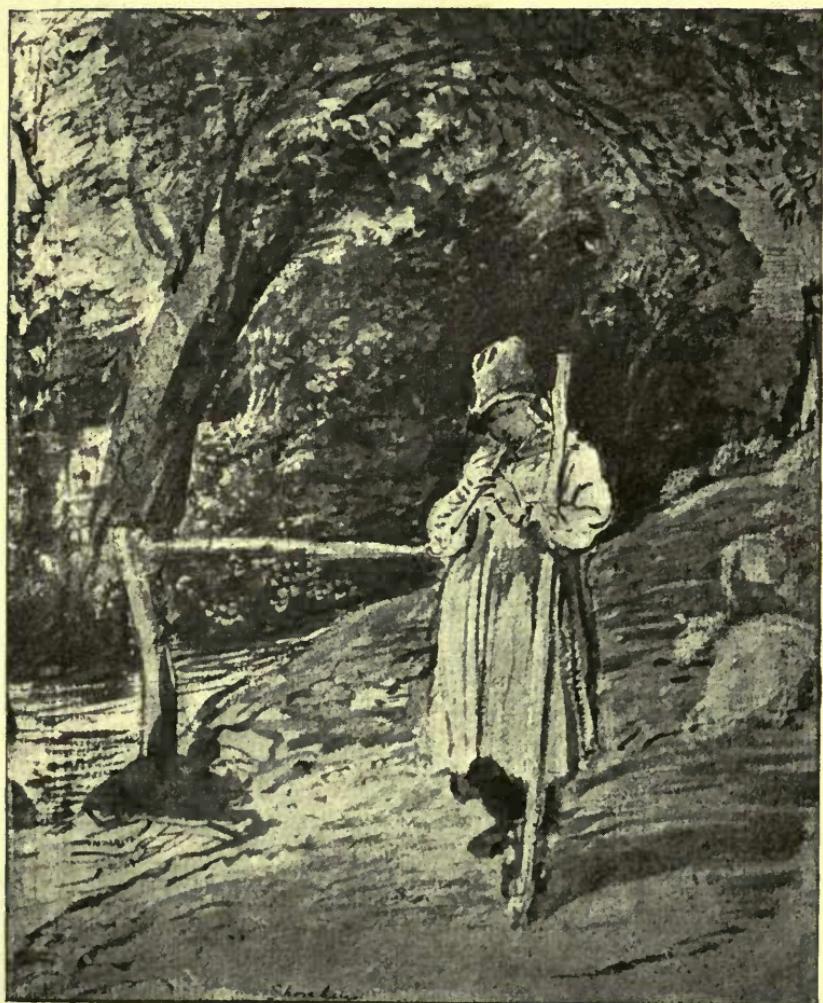
There must at this time have been something primitive and almost patriarchal in the life of the artist's household—if, that is, we can conceive of the sons of a primitive and patriarchal household grinding corn, kneading and baking bread, etc., while declaiming the wrath of Achilles in Chapman's translation of Homer, or discussing some choice passage in Shakespeare ; for Linnell was as original in his views on education as he was in everything else, and rested his faith rather on creating a strong intellectual stimulus than in schoolmasters and the setting of tasks. Hence, with the exception of a few months' instruction in grammar, Latin, and arithmetic from Mr. Samuel Palmer, the father of the landscape-painter, his sons had no aid from masters or teachers until they became Academy students. But the whole artistic and intellectual life of the family was such as to act as an incentive to mental growth and development. There was always something going on from which 'quick' minds could not but receive a powerful impulse.

When the daylight was gone, and he could no

longer see, Linnell was accustomed, as we have seen, to turn to the graver and the steel plate; and while he was thus engaged, he would hear one or the other of his sons read some historical or other work, and discuss with them its merits, or the subject upon which it treated; or if it were one of Shakespeare's dramas which was before them, he would help their understanding of the scope of the play and of the various characters in it by his own perceptions, and by his recollections of the great actors and actresses he had seen—as Macready, Edmund Kean, Mrs. Siddons, the Kemble's, etc.

These early years spent at Bayswater were, perhaps, the most laborious of Linnell's entire life. His work was continuous both day and night. For many years he hardly went out of town at all, unless it were for a day or two to execute some portrait commission. His chief ruralizings at this period were a few days spent on one or two occasions at Shoreham on a visit to his friend Mr. Palmer. These visits took place soon after his removal to Bayswater, and before he had fully recovered from the illness which had been the main cause of his deciding to leave Hampstead; and from them he seems to have derived much benefit.

Mr. Palmer's cottage was at that time a favourite resort of a number of young artists who afterwards attained to fame. Amongst the number, besides young Palmer, were George Richmond, Edward Calvert, and others. They used to love to wander about the country lanes at night, talking poetry and



AT SHOREHAM, KENT.

(*From a sketch made by John Linnell.*)

art, and enjoying the moonlight and silence. On one occasion they were caught prowling about by some labourers, who, taking them to be boys who ought to be in bed, laid hold of them, thinking, perhaps, they might get a reward for conducting them home. It was a very dark night, and so they were not able to see their mistake ; but one of them, happening to place his hand upon Samuel Palmer's closely-cropped head, exclaimed, 'This ain't no boy ; this be an old file,' and they were accordingly let go.

In lieu of going much into the country to sketch at this time, our artist made use of the open fields about him, and within a few yards of his house he got the subjects for two or three of his pictures. One of them was 'The Hollow Tree,' which was exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1836. He subsequently painted two replicas of this subject, one of which, 10 by 14 inches, and bearing the date 1859, was exhibited at the 'Old Masters' in 1883. It represents a stream on the right overhung by trees. Upon one of them, in the foreground, are some children climbing after a nest—other children and a woman are standing near ; in the background to the left are cottages. It represents what Bayswater was about the year 1834, when the original sketch was made.

Another canvas, painted from a sketch made at Porchester Terrace, was 'A Landscape—Morning,' which was exhibited at the British Institution in 1832, and purchased by Mr. E. T. Daniel for fifty guineas. Along with this was exhibited 'The Cow

'Yard,' which subsequently found its way into Mr. Sheepshanks' possession, and by him was bequeathed to the nation, and now forms one of the seven specimens of Linnell's work to be found in the South Kensington Museum. It is a fine example of the artist's early manner. Not less interesting is another picture by Linnell in the Sheepshanks Collection, painted about this period (1830)—namely, '*The Wild-Flower Gatherers*,' showing a group of children rosy with health, and delightedly revelling amongst the flowers, as he loved to depict them.

Mr. Sheepshanks appears to have been a great oddity, with very little independent judgment in regard to art, but very much imposed upon by titles. Thus, on one occasion when Linnell called upon him for an amount that was due to him for a picture, he was shown into an anteroom, where he heard the sound of voices from an adjoining room, and the clatter of knives and forks. Mr. Sheepshanks came in to him, and begged him to wait a minute or two while he fetched the money, saying, '*I can't take you in there*' (pointing to the room whence the sounds came), '*because I have got some R.A.'s at dinner.*'

Amongst others, Linnell heard the voice of William Collins. He was, perhaps, more sensitive than he need have been; but he never forgot being considered unworthy to be taken into the room in which some Academicians were dining.

Later, his relations with Mr. Sheepshanks became more cordial, as will be seen from the following letters:

172, New Bond Street,
Tuesday evening, May 20, 1834.

‘ DEAR SIR,

‘ The note you kindly sent to Bond Street, along with the print of Mr. Callcott, dated Monday, only reached me here after some delay, as I had quitted London on the Saturday. This will explain why I have not thanked you earlier for the portrait, which I shall value very much.

‘ I feel also greatly obliged to you for sending the two pictures for exhibition to Leeds ; and although I hope my townsmen will have the taste to keep both, yet should the smaller one be sent back, I shall be glad to have it at the price you mentioned, and which I think was twenty guineas.

‘ I am sorry that an immediate answer could not be returned to your note, and that some other engagements prevented our friend Mr. Pye from coming to Hastings, otherwise I might have hoped for the pleasure of seeing you there. I have left Mr. J. H. Robinson, and intend to return to him early on Friday morning. We have no engagement that I am aware of until the 30th or 31st of this month, and then only for two or three days. I shall be glad, if it suits your engagements, to see you after the 3rd or 4th of June, as the very short period between the present time and the end of the month would not be worth the trouble of a journey.

‘ I am, dear sir,

‘ Your very obedient servant,

‘ J. SHEEPSHANKS.’

' 172, New Bond Street,

' November 5, 1834.

' DEAR SIR,

' On my arrival from Hastings yesterday evening, I found your note of the 18th, which would, of course, have been answered immediately had I been in town.

' I am quite pleased to think the little picture is mine, and, speaking from recollection, feel satisfied that it requires no alteration. For the want of taste exhibited by my townsmen, I cannot offer an apology. As you very kindly propose to send the picture, I feel disposed to take advantage of your civility, having myself many little matters to attend to during the short time I remain in London ; and should any business bring you into my neighbourhood to-morrow in the morning before twelve, or in the evening after seven, I should be glad to settle the pecuniary part of the business with you.

' Should this arrangement be inconvenient, then I will remain at home all the following mornings during the week until twelve o'clock, or will enclose a cheque for the amount by post if more agreeable to you. The price mentioned was, I think, twenty guineas ; but if I am incorrect, pray set me right, as I always wish to act honestly at least.

' Believe me, dear sir,

' Your very obedient servant,

' J. SHEEPSHANKS.'

When his daughter Hannah was with her husband, Mr. Palmer, in Italy, Linnell wrote her an

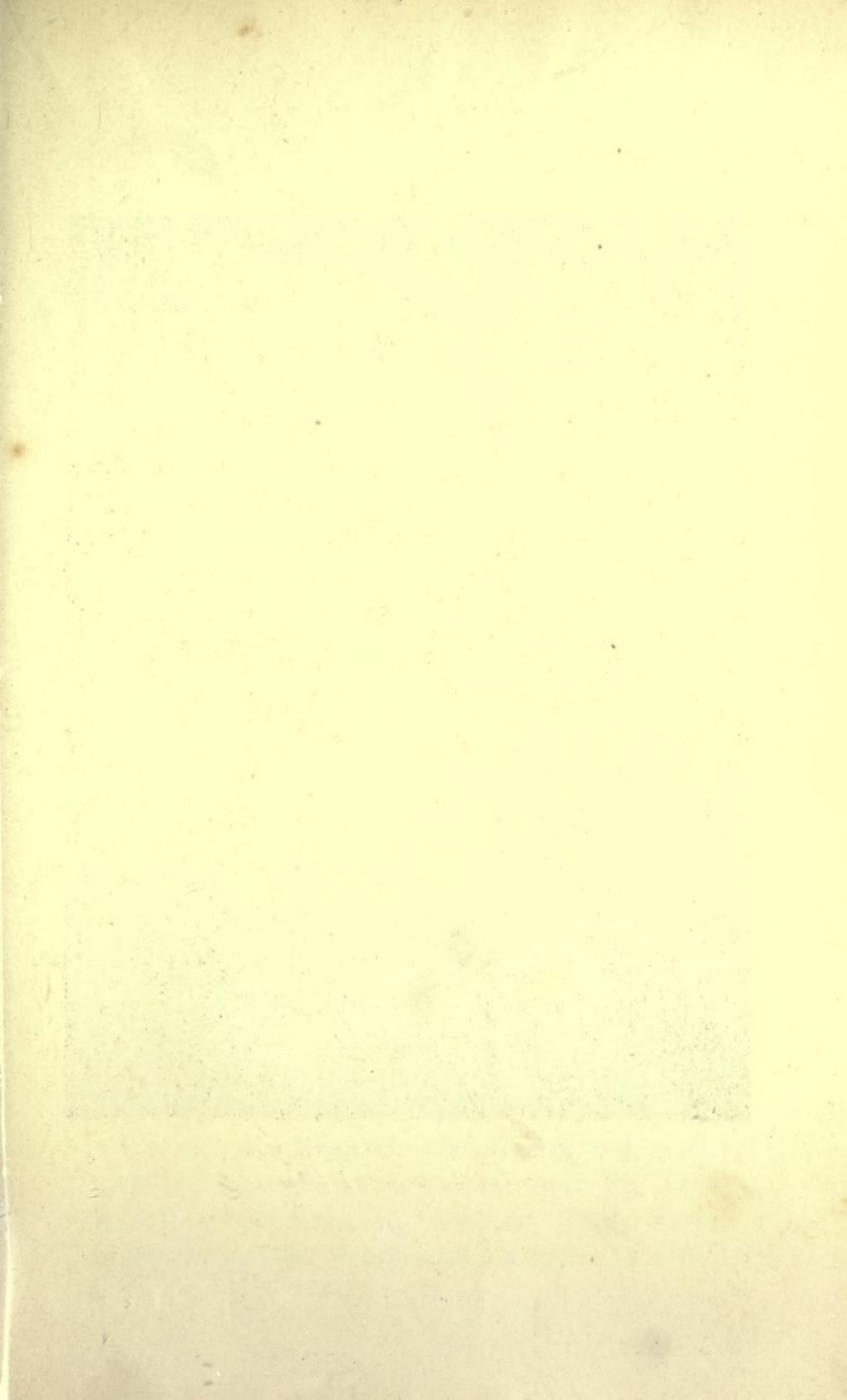
amusing account of a dinner given by Mr. Sheepshanks at which he was a guest :

' I dined the other day at Mr. Sheepshanks', where I met Messrs. Mulready, Collins, Robinson, and Seager. When we had finished our wine, etc., Mr. Collins let out that it was his birthday, which started Mr. Sheepshanks in quest of a bottle of sack. And wonderful stuff it was ! and, in addition to what we had had, went nigh to make us tipsy. Being, however, in such godly company, I thought there was no harm in being drunk, and so took my share. We got to Deptford by a fly, to London Bridge by railroad, and to Bayswater by a 'bus all right.

' Mr. Sheepshanks is a capital fellow. He is as enthusiastic as a young artist, and has a large collection of the best modern pictures, with which he is ready to jump out of his skin with delight. You leave his society with a strong impression that the art is worth ten times the exertion you have ever bestowed upon it. Mr. Mulready's best picture is the crown of the collection.'

Linnell used to relate an amusing anecdote of the way in which Mulready became acquainted with Mr. Sheepshanks. He was a funny little old man, and one day Mulready found him beset in the street by a number of rough fellows, who were pulling him about, and 'guying' him to their hearts' content. The stalwart R.A. stepped in and rescued the old gentleman, dealing a few well-directed blows amongst his assailants that had the effect of

speedily dispersing them. Mr. Sheepshanks was exceedingly grateful for this yeoman's service on the part of Mulready, begged to be made acquainted with his name, and became henceforth his steady friend and patron.





AUGUSTUS WALL CALLCOTT, R.A.
(From an oil-painting by J. Linnell.)

CHAPTER XVII.

Friendships—Rev. E. T. Daniel—‘St. John the Baptist Preaching’—Turner—‘Noon’—Callcott—Lady Callcott—William Collins—‘Sabbath-breaking’—Opinion of Collins’s Art—Constable—Ceases Membership of Keppel Street.

AMONG the many notable and famous men whom Linnell at this time counted in the number of his friends, one of the most influential was the Rev. E. T. Daniel, already mentioned, who was the curate of St. Martin’s, North Audley Street. This gentleman, although not specially rich, was one of the best known patrons and encouragers of art of his time. Himself an amateur of no mean ability, and a pupil of Girtin’s, he was one of the first to recognise talent in others, and to stimulate them by his countenance and support. His house in Park Lane was a treasure-house of art, and comprised works by some of the best painters of the day, including several of Linnell’s, and not a few by Turner, Callcott, Creswick, and others.

Linnell’s acquaintance with Daniel had begun while the latter was still at Oxford, he having written thence to him respecting some of Blake’s works, which he wanted to bring to the notice of a local

publisher, as well as to interest some of the Dons in them ; but he was only able to record a failure in both respects.

Subsequently, after a residence of several years in Norfolk, Daniel settled in London, and became one of our artist's best friends. It was now Daniel's delight to entertain men of genius, especially painters ; and many were the celebrities who met for the first time at his board, where Linnell was a frequent and honoured guest.

Mr. Daniel had ever the highest esteem for him, and was one of the first among the patrons of art to recognise his great powers. He it was who induced the artist to finish his '*St. John the Baptist Preaching in the Wilderness*,' the first sketch of which, begun in 1818, hung for many years on the wall of his studio. Struck by its greatceptive and executive power, he offered, as already stated, to purchase it himself, if, when completed, another buyer were not forthcoming.

The picture represents a wooded vale between high hills ; St. John is in the foreground, with his back to the spectator, preaching with up-lifted hands to the multitude around him. The canvas measures 38 by 53 inches, and is dated 1828-33. It was not, however, until 1839 that it was exhibited for the second time in the British Institution with the title '*St. John Preaching*.' It was then the means of bringing the painter a certain amount of fame, on account of the many fine qualities it displayed.

It was at Mr. Daniel's that Linnell first met

Turner, whose portrait he afterwards painted from memory. It is one of the few likenesses we have of the great landscape-painter, and possesses, therefore, a certain value; but, while reproducing truthfully the lineaments of the subject, it is somewhat lacking in individuality, and Linnell himself did not rate it very highly as a portrait. It was executed in 1838, and sold for 150 guineas, subsequently selling at Christie's for 74 guineas. Turner had previously been asked to sit to the artist, but had refused, as he invariably did all such applications.

Probably Mr. Daniel himself proffered the request, he being on very good terms with Turner, and greatly esteemed by him. The artist's daughter Elizabeth remembers Turner calling at her father's studio at Bayswater to see Mr. Daniel's portrait, then in progress, and commending it for its life-like qualities. A small etching of this portrait was subsequently executed as a frontispiece to a life of Mr. Daniel.

Mr. Daniel not unfrequently went out of his way to do Linnell a good turn. One instance in which he did so is worth recording. In 1840 the artist sent to the Academy his picture entitled 'Noon' (29 by 38½ inches), which was rejected. It is one of the best works he ever did in the Italian style, of which it is a notable example. It is peculiar for its freshness and purity of colour, having been painted in tempera first and finished in oil, according to the method practised by the early Italian painters, such as Perugino and others of the pre-Raphaelite age.

The landscape, which was painted from a sketch made years before in the Isle of Wight, presents the interior of a wood, through which a brook is flowing, with a flock of sheep scattered about among the trees, and the shepherd sitting at the foot of an old gnarled trunk. In the distance, through the over-hanging foliage, we get a glimpse of the sea. The picture is inscribed :

‘Where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon.’
Song of Solomon, i. 7.

Mr. Daniel was indignant when, calling upon his friend, he found the picture in his studio, whither it had been brought after having been turned out, and before the exhibition was opened.

‘Send it to my house,’ said Mr. Daniel. ‘I am expecting several Academicians to dine with me to-night. I will hang it over my mantelpiece, and we will hear what they have to say about it. None of the hangers will be present, and so they will not know that it has been rejected.’

He did as he said, hanging the picture conspicuously over his chimneypiece, where it soon attracted the attention of his guests, amongst whom were Turner and Eastlake. All admired it, especially the latter, who took great delight in the early Italian school.

Then Daniel quietly turned upon them, and said :

‘You are a pretty set of men to pretend to stand up for high art and to proclaim the Academy the

fosterer of artistic talent, and yet allow such a picture to be rejected!"

All averred that there must have been some mistake on the part of the hangers. But, as a matter of fact, the rejection was not made by an oversight, for the two Academician chiefly responsible that year for the hanging, Uwins and Lee, afterwards justified their action, saying Linnell's did not go well with the other pictures: which might possibly be the case.

It was such occurrences as these that sometimes made our artist, not exactly complain, for he never did that, but think that selection did not always go by merit.

After Linnell's death this picture was borrowed from Mr. David Jardine for the Old Masters Exhibition of 1883, when, it is said, Sir Frederick Leighton greatly admired it, as did also other Academicians.

Linnell met many other men of note at these gatherings at Mr. Daniel's house. Amongst others may be named Sir A. W. Callcott, R.A., Thomas Creswick, R.A., William Collins, R.A., Abraham Cooper, David Roberts, R.A., J. C. Horsley, etc.

Some of them were near neighbours. Callcott lived at the Kensington Gravel Pits, and, like the Collapses, was on very intimate terms with Linnell and his family, as a number of letters from him and Lady Callcott indicate. The greater number of the letters are by Lady Callcott, who was a woman of high character and attainments, as well as of great

originality. She was the daughter of Rear-Admiral Dundas, and prior to marrying Mr. Callcott was the wife of Captain Graham, R.N., with whom she had travelled much, and so improved a vigorous and inquiring mind. She had previously published some interesting works, such as an account of her 'Travels in India,' her 'Three Months in the Environs of Rome,' and her 'History of Spain'; but her most popular and best-written work was 'Little Arthur's History of England,' of which many hundreds of thousands have been printed and sold.

Lady Callcott was a great and original talker, and her drawing-room was the focus of a good deal of animated intellectual life. Linnell was a frequent visitor, and was always greatly interested in the people he met and the conversation he heard there. He used to describe the famous blue-stocking as being oftentimes not less striking in her remarks than in her dress. On one occasion, the conversation turning upon the terms in use for women, as female, etc., she surprised the company by remarking with quiet emphasis: 'As for me, I would rather be called a bitch than a female.'

Several of the letters refer to the portrait which the artist painted of Lady Callcott's brother-in-law, Dr. Warren. None of them are dated, but as the portrait of Dr. Warren was painted in 1837, that fact supplies an approximate date for the letters. One or two of the others evidently belong to a later date.

‘MY DEAR SIR,

‘If you will come and meet Dr. Warren here and paint him, he will sit. I have taken upon me to say you will. He comes to me on Saturdays always, as near to four o’clock as he can. And as he has no other time to spare, I have agreed that he shall sit for his picture and visit me at the same time. Now, I think that is being generous, for I receive no visit I like half so well as his, and therefore dividing it with anybody I consider as very kind, especially to his sister, for whom the portrait is to be.

‘You perceive that I presume my brother’s morning portrait is not to prevent us an afternoon sitting. If you have anything to say about it, pray call any afternoon. Dr. Warren’s is a head full of character.

‘Yours truly,

‘M. CALLCOTT.’

‘MY DEAR SIR,

‘My brother called yesterday, and says if he is alive he will be here by a little after eleven on Saturday for the purpose of your beginning the operation of *taking off his head*. You can send your materials, and I will have an easel got ready.

‘Yours very truly,

‘M. CALLCOTT.

‘*Thursday morning?*

‘MY DEAR SIR,

‘Dr. Warren is still very ill, and in the country. I expect to hear from his daughter in a

day or two. Take great care of the picture. Would you do me the favour to make me a small copy of just the head for myself, as like as you can, and as soon as you can? I will not quarrel about price.

Yours truly,

'M. CALLCOTT.

'November 5.'

'Tuesday morning.

'DEAR LINNELL,

'Lady Callcott has just received a note from Miss Fox to say that, as she could not trust her feelings to see you herself on the subject of the drawing of Lord Holland, she would be pleased if Lady Callcott would settle with you for it for her. She says the report Lady Mary made to her of the success of the sketch was most gratifying. In making this request to Lady Callcott, Miss Fox evidently supposes we are acquainted with the price you have for such things. She has told her in reply that this is not the case, but that we will send to you to know the amount, and give her your reply.

'We should both be much gratified if you could oblige us with a sight of the drawing before it goes to her.

'I am,

'Yours very truly,

'A. W. CALLCOTT.'

'MY DEAR SIR,

'Mr. Mackintosh, the son of the late Sir James Mackintosh, called here to-day to inquire if we could recommend him to an engraver who would

execute a small commission. He is publishing two octavo volumes of memoirs and papers of his father. For the first volume they have a portrait from Lawrence's picture, engraved under the inspection of Goodall, and they now wish to have for the second volume an engraving after a bust which they think still more like their father in his latter days. This bust Mr. Mackintosh would bring from Clapham to the house of whatever artist would engrave from it. I have told him nobody will preserve the likeness, or do the thing altogether so well as you, but that this is a very busy season, and the time he can allow—that is, until the last of March—very short. He seems inclined to trust to the artist's taste entirely, as to the slightness and kind of work, as he seems to know little as to the kind of engraving himself. The size is ordinary octavo, therefore the plate will be small, and I thought, short as the time is, you might manage it.

‘Can you let me hear from you so as I might write to him by the mid-day post to-morrow? If you had rather talk than write about it, I can see you in my dressing-gown any time after twelve to-morrow.

‘I am, dear sir,

‘Yours truly,

‘MARIÀ CALLCOTT.’

‘MY DEAR SIR,

‘I am more than pleased with the drawing you have sent, and I shall put into your care the

print from Pietro Perugino. I wish to have the group of sibyls only copied, the rest not belonging to my subject. You must let me know what I am indebted to the young artist. I am not surprised to hear that you are suffering from cold ; this weather is trying to everybody. I feel it very much ; but we must all learn to bear it patiently. With compliments to Mrs. Linnell, believe me to remain,

‘Yours truly,

‘M A R I A C A L L C O T T .

‘Monday afternoon.’

William Collins left Hampstead very soon after Linnell, and took a house close to him in Porchester Terrace. His attachment to our artist appears to have been very sincere, albeit he seems at times to have had some scruples about associating with a man who was not only a Dissenter, but a ‘ Sabbath-breaker,’ he himself favouring the Puseyite form of faith—a form which Linnell satirized in many a stinging line, as in the following :

‘ The monster lie exists at Rome,
Diluted it is seen at home—
Priesthood set up, the Antichrist foretold,
Taking the place of Him who from of old
Was true High Priest, who coming did fulfil
All priestly types, and of his own free will
The sacrifice became for all, even the least,
And therefore no longer sacrifice, no longer priest.’

Collins called Linnell a Sabbath-breaker because he did not believe in our English Sunday. The fact is, Linnell’s study of the Bible had led him to

the conclusion that the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath was founded upon an erroneous understanding of the Scriptures, and, in accordance with his usual method, he did not allow himself to be bound by a religious ordinance that was without Divine authority. Of his arguments in support of his contention more will have to be said anon. Suffice it here to state that while he avoided giving unnecessary offence to those who differed from him on this point, he did not refrain from doing work on that day if he thought fit. Hence his neighbour's qualms.

One Sunday, in the warm spring weather, Collins happened to see Linnell piously nailing his peach and nectarine trees against his northern wall, and was greatly shocked. Not long after, when Dr. Liefchild, a famous Congregational preacher of those days, was one day sitting for his portrait, Linnell sent for Collins, thinking he would like to know the gentleman. Collins was pleased to have the introduction ; but during the conversation which ensued he took occasion to denounce his brother-artist as a Sabbath-breaker. To his surprise, Liefchild, though he held to a strict observance of the Sabbath, recognised Linnell's conscientious objections, and refrained from pronouncing the condemnation Collins had doubtless looked for.

On another occasion Collins gave currency to a report that Linnell had refused to pay one of his workmen, and wanted to cheat him out of his wages. The calumny had reference to a man

named Hobbs, whom the artist employed most of his time in the garden, or doing other work about the place. In consequence of his wife having on several occasions asked for and obtained his wages, and then spent a large portion of the money in drink, Linnell refused to give the money to her any more. She therefore went and maliciously told the Collinses that he would not pay her husband's wages, and Collins told the story to others. When our artist heard what was being said, he took Hobbs to Collins, and asked him to say in the latter's presence if he had ever refused to pay him his wages.

'No; you always paid me straight, like a gentleman,' Hobbs replied.

'Now, Mr. Collins,' said Linnell, 'I hope you will acknowledge your error in circulating such an accusation without first ascertaining the truth of it.'

'Of what consequence is it,' Collins replied, 'whether you cheated a man out of his wages or not, when you are constantly doing things ten times worse?'

'I suppose that is a hit at me for nailing up my nectarines on a Sunday afternoon,' said Linnell.

Collins acknowledged that it was, and said that 'a man who would break the Sabbath would do any other bad thing.'

The worthy Academician, though an amiable, was in many respects rather a weak-minded, man. He appeared always to be oppressed by the twin bugbears propriety and respectability, and found it

difficult to forgive anyone who failed in his respect to them.

Everyone has read the story of his meeting Blake in the Strand with a pot of porter in his hand, and passing him without recognition. When he became an R.A., he felt that he greatly overtopped all who had not attained to that dignity, and could not, therefore, legitimately write themselves down 'Esquire,' as the King (to use his own words) had given him the title to do.

In this Collins reminds one of Uwins, who, when Linnell called on him about the rejection of his picture 'Noon,' pointed to his Academy diploma, gorgeously framed and glazed, over his chimney-piece, as though it were a patent of infallibility.

These appear puerile matters; but they are, nevertheless, the sort of stuff of which our life is largely composed. Nor are such weaknesses without their kindly side. If men were equally strong all round, they might, perhaps, be less amiable; and that Collins was of a good-natured and neighbourly disposition, notwithstanding some narrowness, is proved by the fact that the friendship betwixt him and Linnell never suffered any serious interruption, and that he was frank, and even generous, in his acknowledgment of Linnell's many kindnesses to him.

The following letters show the kindly relations subsisting between the two families. The first is dated from Hampstead, and the second, although undated, evidently belongs to the period of the

writer's and Linnell's residence at Hampstead, because Blake, to whom it has reference, died whilst they were there.

'Hampstead,

'Thursday morning.

'DEAR LINNELL,

'I lose no time in writing to assure you that nothing but the distance and a very severe illness which I had soon after my return from Holland have prevented my calling upon you at Bayswater. No longer ago than last night I heard (as I have frequently done before) from Mulready that you were going on well.

'With respect to your relative, I recollect giving him a letter to the National Gallery in his real name, but I had nothing to do with his admission to the Academy; but I will inquire about him when I go there again, and will let you know the result when I have the pleasure of seeing you, which I sincerely hope I shall be able to accomplish as soon as a cold which I am now nursing will allow me.

'Mrs. Collins wishes very much to call upon Mrs. Linnell, and it is not impossible that we may visit you together. She and the children are, thank God, very well, but my mother is still in a melancholy way.

'With our kindest regards to Mrs. Linnell, yourself, and family,

'Believe me,

'Most faithfully yours,

'WILLIAM COLLINS.'

‘Monday morning,
11, New Cavendish Street.’*

‘DEAR LINNELL,

‘If Mr. Blake will send a receipt to Mr. Smirke, junior, Stratford Place, he will be paid. It is not necessary that Mr. B. should make a formal application.

‘Yours faithfully,

‘WILLIAM COLLINS.

‘Let me know the result.’

The next letter probably belongs to the same or a little later period :

‘Thursday night.

‘DEAR LINNELL,

‘Will it suit your convenience to go with me on Saturday next at half-past one to see the collection of German pictures in Euston Square?

‘Yours truly,

‘W. COLLINS.

‘I have written to Mulready to request he will call here at the hour above mentioned.’

Fortunately the two following interesting letters, written from North Wales, are dated :

‘Llanberis, N.W.,
‘August 11, 1834.

‘DEAR LINNELL,

‘I have just received yours containing the halves of a £10 and £5 note. At your earliest

* Mr. Collins’s studio was in New Cavendish Street.

convenience send me the remainder by the same mode of conveyance, with any other letters which may have been received since. When you happen to go into the City—pray do not go on purpose—be kind enough to call upon Mr. Searle at Messrs. George Wildes and Searle (19, I think), Coleman Street, and show him the annexed letter, as well as this part of mine, as your authority to receive the amount there mentioned, which keep for me until my return. Do not leave Mr. Lee's letter with him unless he insists upon it, as I wish to keep it. As yet I do not feel much benefited by my journey—my spirits still flag much ; but all is for the best, as I feel greatly humbled.

‘With regards to Mrs. Linnell and all friends,

‘Yours truly,

‘W. COLLINS.

‘How are the Richmonds ?

‘I thank you for your offer of touching upon the picture by Finden, and accept it. Let me know what is the subject of it.

‘Mrs. Collins desires the remainder of this scrap, so farewell. When you see Wilkie, tell him I wish much to know how he is, and give him my regards. I hope to find time to write to him soon.’

‘I thank you, my dear friend, for your kind note, and the information it contains. I wish you could see our present place of residence—surrounded by such mountains and rocks ; but I have not lost my cat-like propensity of loving home. There are

troubles and difficulties everywhere. Lucy has been very ill since we have been here, and no servant is kept by our landlady, who has a young child and a shop to mind. I leave you to judge of the attendance under these circumstances.

' It is quite a foreign country ; no one understands us, nor can we comprehend their jargon. Milk is scarce—eggs the same ; bread very doubtful to get, unless you send seven miles to Carnarvon. Meat only to be had there. Lean ducks and chickens brought alive for us to get killed and picked ; no fruit ; good potatoes—no other vegetable. The scenery is truly grand, but of the wild, savage kind. Mr. Collins went to the top of Snowdon Friday with the Bells, who came here on their way home. We have the only lodging in the place ; but there are two good inns.

' I think I am nearly the same as usual in health. Willy quite well ; Charlie thinner, and has been poorly, but is again picking up. I have never heard from my sister. I think the letter she talked of writing must be lost. Perhaps Anny would write for me a few lines to her to say that I fear she has written, and the letter miscarried, and that if she sends to you it will be forwarded.

' How shall we ever make you amends for all you have done and are doing for us ?

' We shall proceed on our travels on Saturday ; but Mr. Bransby will still be our agent. We are going through Beddgelert, Dolgelly, etc., to Barmouth, where I hope we shall be stationary.

‘ Farewell. Love to Anny, Lizzie, etc., and believe me,

‘ Most affectionately yours,

‘ W. COLLINS.’

‘ Beddgelert, North Wales,
‘ August 18, 1834.

‘ DEAR LINNELL,

‘ I have this morning seen a gentleman from Birmingham, who seems to think the present season most favourable for their exhibition, as the great music meeting and other local attractions will draw much company to the town. This circumstance, and his request that I should send them a picture, has brought to my recollection what you advised in one of your recent letters, and I have decided upon sending the “Haunts of the Seafowl.” You were good enough to offer your services should I feel disposed to send them anything, and I beg to accept them. I hope, too, you will embrace the favourable opportunity, and let them have a picture or two of your own.

‘ The picture has been carefully hung up, and if you can spare time, perhaps you will be present when it is taken down, and, as it is very heavy, give a caution to those who undertake to pack it for Birmingham. I have this evening written to the secretary, Mr. Wyatt, but it will be proper that you should send a letter describing the picture as above, and stating that it is for sale at the price of three hundred guineas, including the frame.

‘ We are all pretty well, and delighting in the

scenery of this neighbourhood, and purpose going on to Barmouth in a few days. Carnarvon, as before, will be the best address, as Mr. Bransby will forward all communications. I had hoped to receive the other halves of the notes this morning; I trust, however, soon to get them.

' Harriet unites with me in kindest remembrances to Mrs. Linnell and the family, as well as to all friends.

' Very faithfully yours,

' WILLIAM COLLINS.

* * * * *

' Did you receive a letter containing an order on Mr. Searle, of the house of George Wildes and Searle, 19, Coleman Street, for £9 odd ?

Soon after the date of the last letter—that is, in 1835—Mr. Alaric A. Watts wrote to John Linnell, asking if he could help him 'with a few anecdotes of our excellent friend W. Collins, to relieve the baldness of mere dates' in an article he was writing about the Royal Academy to accompany a print of his picture of 'The Gate,' and suggesting that a little criticism and description of some of his pictures would be acceptable. In reply Linnell wrote as follows :

' DEAR SIR,

' I am sorry that I find it difficult to remember anything respecting our friend Collins which would be useful to you, especially when I confine myself within the limits consistent with my intimacy

with him. I think it best, therefore, to mention only those facts which his modesty and goodness would prevent your obtaining from himself, such, for instance, as his supporting his mother entirely to the day of her death, and partly his brother. His father, who dealt in pictures, kept a small shop in Great Portland Street, and died, without leaving any property, when Collins was not more, I believe, than about twenty years of age. But he improved so rapidly as soon to be enabled to take a house in New Cavendish Street, where some of his best pictures were painted—"The Sale of Fish by Dropping a Stone" was one, I remember. From there he removed to Hampstead, where he painted his "Frost Piece," and companion, for Sir Robert Peel. His early success, however, was in a great measure owing to his patronage by Lord Liverpool.

Collins's painting-room at Cavendish Street was an interesting *atelier*, and was made by simply inserting a skylight into the roof of the attic floor and removing some partitions. The sloping ceiling, with the screens covered with beautiful sketches on mill-board without frames, and arranged only for the purposes of study, the lay figure draped, etc., with a fireplace like that of an alchemist, small and convenient for experiments, some of which were generally going on for perfecting varnishes and oils, altogether made a most picturesque retreat, which was visited by many great personages, who were sometimes candid enough to confess there was a charm about a place arranged for the purposes of art which

surpassed all the splendours of their *impracticable* saloons. There was a kind of monastic seclusion and security about this nest of art which at once delighted and humbled the mind of the visitor, producing a love of art without ostentation.

'Of Collins's style and painting in general, it may be said that, though there may be some artists who are more intensely admired by a few, there is no one who has more admirers, and few so many.'

A characteristic anecdote relating to the intimacy existing between the two families is told by the sons of the painter. Young Wilkie Collins, who was their playmate at Bayswater, was one day in the garden with them, when they happened to draw upon themselves the wrath of their father. Said young Wilkie when the passing storm was over : 'I should not like your father to be mine. Your father is a bull; mine is a cow.' Not a bad bit of characterization for one who was afterwards to become a famous novelist.

Constable was even less tolerant of Linnell's dissent than Collins. He used to say that all Dissenters had heads no better than shoemakers, to which Linnell retorted that Constable's own head was like a shoemaker's, being long and flat. This hostility on the part of Constable, and the action he took in regard to our artist's candidature for the associateship of the Academy, tended to convince the latter that his unpopular opinions had much to do with his being refused the honour of membership.

Some may regard these stories as not worth repeating. They seem altogether unimportant; but when it is considered how much the history of the world, and of individuals, is made up of such trifles, they can no longer be regarded as unimportant. Society builds up its men, like Nebuchadnezzar's image, partly of brass and partly of clay; even its greatest men cannot be spared these feet of the baser material. Why, then, should we try to hide them, or pass them over as minor and not-to-be-considered blots on the perfect image? When Collins was weak enough to threaten his friend and neighbour with prosecution (as he did) for not attending church, he was acting in accordance with the ecclesiastical spirit of his time; and had he done as he said, the proceeding to many would not have appeared very unreasonable or illiberal. But how would it look now? It is only by getting a little perspective that we are enabled to see how small and paltry things are that, when near, have a tendency to look very different.

It should be said that Linnell had as early as 1828 ceased to attend the Baptist church in Keppel Street, preferring to remain at home with his wife and children, and worship God in his own way. He still remained true to the chief tenets of the Baptist faith, however, although on some lesser points he had come to differ from them. Holding that religion was of the heart and mind, and not a matter of formal worship and display, he considered that the mere frequenting of a place of worship was

a minor matter. Hence when he was a member of the Keppel Street body, he was by no means a regular attendant at the services. This 'laxity' did not please the other members of the church, and after one warning and remonstrance, without effect, his name was struck from the roll.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Portrait-painting—Portraits of Calcott, Mulready, Collins, William Bray, Malthus, Sir Robert Peel, Archbishop Whately, Sarah Austin—Lord Jeffrey—Misunderstanding with Mulready—‘A Real Man’—Carlyle—Anecdote of—Letters by—Death of the Artist’s Father—Spirit of Linnell’s Art.

DURING his residence at Bayswater, although, as we have seen, Linnell executed many notable landscapes, yet to the world generally he was best known as a portrait-painter. The portraits that he did at that time are almost uncountable. Even those in oil are very numerous; but in addition to these he executed a large number in chalk and water-colours. Many of the latter being small in size, he was able to do them very quickly.

Thus, when he went into the country, as he frequently did, for the purpose of painting the portraits of a whole family, he would begin and finish half a dozen in the course of a few days.

In January, 1825 (from the 2nd to the 17th), Linnell was at Cheltenham, where he painted the portraits of General and Mrs. Darling, also of Master Darling, and a group of General Darling’s two children for Colonel Dumaresque. In April and October the same year he again visited Chelten-



WILLIAM BRAY, ÆTAT. 97.

(*From an oil-painting by J. Linnell.*)

ham, on the second occasion to paint a portrait of Mrs. Kingscote. Linnell's portraits, even in the slighter material of chalk (adopted at a later period) and water-colours, were always greatly admired for their forcible expression and lifelike qualities. At first he used to get five guineas for portraits of this description drawn on buff paper (about half imperial in size); but later he had as many as he could do at ten guineas or more.

To this period belong many of his most famous portraits, notable alike for their truthfulness of expression and fine painting, many of them possessing Holbein-like qualities — freedom of handling, strong expression, and fine colouring. Not a few of these portraits are of considerable historical interest.

Amongst the number may be mentioned the likenesses of Sir A. W. Callcott (now in the possession of Mr. J. C. Horsley, R.A.), Mulready and William Collins; also that of Mr. William Bray, of Shere, who was the treasurer of the Society of Antiquaries, editor of Evelyn's 'Memoirs,' and author of a 'History of Surrey.' It is a small half-length figure seated in an armchair, and was executed in 1832, shortly before the subject's death at the age of ninety-seven. Of this portrait—which is one of the best the artist painted—Linnell, as already stated, afterwards executed a fine engraving in mezzotint.

To this period belong also the portraits of the Rev. T. R. Malthus, the author of the famous 'Essay on the Principles of Population' (1833); Mr. Thomas Empson (1843); Thomas Phillips,

R.A., Professor of Painting (1835); Dr. Warren (1837); Sir Robert Peel (1838, and again in 1839); Archbishop Whately (1838); Mr. Spring-Rice (afterwards Lord Monteagle); William Otter, D.D., Bishop of Chichester (1843); John Claudius Loudon, the botanist (1840-41); Mrs. Sarah Austin (two), Lord Lansdowne, and Sir Thomas and Lady Baring.

The portraits of Mrs. Austin are of special interest, as being of a lady of great personal beauty, as well as of sterling literary accomplishments. She was the mother of Lady Duff Gordon, and came of a distinguished and talented family (the Taylors of Norwich), to which her many works, foremost among which stand her translation of Ranke's 'History of the Popes' and her 'Characteristics of Goethe,' gave additional lustre. Between Linnell and Mrs. Austin a strong friendship existed, and one of his portraits of her in especial shows a loving and masterly hand.

One of these portraits was purchased by Lord Jeffrey. The following letter, among others, has reference to the transaction.

‘24, Moray Place, Edinburgh,
‘July 7, 1834.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I have had the honour of receiving your obliging letter of last week, and am very happy to find that you have finished that promising picture of Mrs. Austin to your satisfaction. The price is a little more than I had reckoned on. But that is of no consequence, and if you cannot (or will not) make

another, of the smaller size, which she thinks better, I shall be most happy to have this, on the terms you mention.

‘She, I find, is not perfectly satisfied with the character and expression of what is rendered ; and I should certainly prefer having a resemblance which she admitted to be just. I should not think, however, of putting you to the trouble of another attempt, had I not understood that you originally wished to retain this picture for yourself, and may, therefore, have no objection to making a second and letting me have my choice.

‘If this, however, should seem unreasonable, or be inconvenient to you, I beg you will have the goodness to say so, when I shall readily settle, in the way you prefer. I feel too much obliged by the readiness with which you agreed to let me have the picture, when I asked it, to be now capable of pressing anything to which you have the smallest repugnance.

‘I shall be a good deal from home for two or three months to come, and have no wish, therefore, to have the picture sent immediately ; so that, at all events, you may, if so inclined, have time enough to prepare a rival for it, and give each of us a chance (from unhappy diversity of tastes) of having our favourite.

‘In the meantime I have the honour to be,

‘Dear sir,

‘Your obedient and faithful servant,

‘N. JEFFREY.

‘If it be any convenience to you to receive the price now, I shall lose no time in remitting it.’

A subsequent letter indicates that someone who had seen the portrait reported to Lord Jeffrey that it was something 'short of perfection.' He in consequence suggested further work upon it. This the artist declined to do, and said that he had no great desire to part with the picture, whereupon Lord Jeffrey, enclosing a draft, asked Linnell to keep it for him until he returned from his ramble.

One of the portraits of Sir Robert Peel was commissioned by Mr. Norris, a former partner in the Peel cotton-spinning firm, and presented to Sir Robert's father. The statement has often been made that Linnell's early predilection was for Dutch art, and that his first style was based thereon. It has been pointed out in the foregoing pages that such was not the case, and an observation the artist made in regard to Sir Robert Peel's artistic taste emphasizes the fact. When he was painting Peel's portraits he had many opportunities of seeing his gallery, and he noted the fact that it was 'based on Dutch art.' Being something of a phrenologist, he noticed that Sir Robert had a broad lower part of the brow, and no reflective faculties, and remarked that he possessed 'no second storey to his head.' This he considered the reason of Sir Robert's admiration for Dutch, to the exclusion of almost all other art, because it is for the most part a simple transcription of the more physical aspects of nature, without any appeal to the higher imaginative and spiritual faculties of the mind.

An incident in connection with the portraits of Sir



MRS. SARAH AUSTIN.

(*From an oil-painting by J. Linnell, 1840.*)

Thomas and Lady Baring led to a temporary interruption of the life-long friendship between the artist and Mulready. The two portraits, both small full-length figures, on canvas 44 by 36 inches in size, considered by the artist two of the best he ever did, and greatly admired by all, were sent to the Academy. Mulready was on the Hanging Committee that year, and from him Linnell received a message advising him to withdraw the portraits on the ground that he feared he could not find a good place for them. This request was the more difficult to understand because Mulready had previously praised the portraits very highly. Linnell replied that he would rather have them placed anywhere than rejected. He heard no more from Mulready, but the pictures were well hung.

For some time after this incident there was a coldness between the two friends. Mulready, who had been a constant visitor at Porchester Terrace, now did not go, and when he and Linnell met he was distant and reserved. The estrangement was healed, however, before very long by Linnell generously taking his friend's part when unjust allegations were made against him relative to his treatment of his son William. Linnell, hearing the story, declared that it was impossible that it could be true; from his long acquaintance with Mulready, he knew him to be incapable of the meanness with which he was charged. When the latter heard of his friend's kindly vindication, he called and thanked him warmly for his generous advocacy, at the same time showing

him documents which proved that the charges made against him were unfounded. The breach between them was then healed.

Linnell's estimate of Mulready's character was a very high one. The worthy Academician had a phrase by which he was wont to designate thoroughly earnest and sincere men—they were 'real men.' So, using his own words, Mulready was to Linnell a real man. In his younger days he had been a wit—something of a practical joker—and capable of carrying everything before him in that line; but gradually, as the realities of life closed about him, and especially after the separation from his wife, he sobered down, and became a very serious and thoughtful man, precise in all his dealings, punctilious in conduct, and somewhat austere in his general manners. He was almost the very antipodes of John Varley, albeit always a stanch friend. When he played at billiards (as he sometimes did with Linnell), he played so careful and scientific a game that it was very hard to score against him, and there was consequently not much fun in the game for his opponent. As in his play, so in life: he adopted the most tried and approved rules, and did his best to follow them.

The Carlyle portrait, painted in 1844, was among the latest that the artist painted, although he did not finally relinquish portraiture until 1847. It is worthy of record that Linnell first came to know Carlyle through their common friend Mr. William Coningham, afterwards member of Parliament for



THOMAS CARLYLE.

(*From a painting by J. Linnell, 1844.*)

Brighton. He lived two or three doors from the artist, in Porchester Terrace, and it was at his house that Linnell met the famous writer. Linnell had previously painted the portrait of Mr. Coningham, and it was the acknowledged excellence of this work that probably induced Carlyle to consent to sit for his likeness. This portrait, together with several others still in the possession of the Linnell family, appeared in the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1883.

The artist used to tell an amusing anecdote in connection with the sittings Carlyle gave him for his portrait. The Sage had a great deal to say in favour of the Catholics.

Among other things he said that they did not worship the images which appear so prominently in their ritual, but merely regarded them as representing an idea. Linnell recalled to his mind the description contained in Isaiah (chap. xliv.) of the man who got a block of wood, made a fire, and cooked his dinner with it, and then took the lump that remained, carved an image out of it, and worshipped it. Carlyle was greatly amused when the passage was recalled to his memory. He threw himself back in his chair, and with a loud roar of laughter cried, repeating a portion of the text: “Deliver me, for thou art my god!” A great jackass!

The following letters from Carlyle to the artist in regard to the sittings for his portrait are characteristic, and will doubtless be of interest to the reader:

'Chelsea,
'Saturday.

' MY DEAR SIR,

' Truly it would give me great pleasure to have my likeness taken by you ; but I am at present in such a press of business, sickliness, and confusion, I fear it is totally impossible till the Exhibition time, and more, is like to be past.

' With many respects and kind regards,

' Yours most truly,

' T. CARLYLE.'

The second is dated Chelsea, June 30, 1843, and is as follows :

' MY DEAR SIR,

' Above a week ago you were kind enough to ask me to come and have that stationary portrait set in movement towards completion. I was too busy at the moment to think of anything whatever but what lay among my hands—up to my very *chin* ; your very note has never yet been answered.

' I go to Wales on Monday, having, indeed, terrible need of the country every way, and have, as you may imagine, every hour of the interim occupied, not in the pleasantest way.

' Believe me,

' Yours always truly,

' T. CARLYLE.'

A third letter is dated Chelsea, March 15, 1844, and is as follows :

'DEAR SIR,

'I was hardly ever busier in my life than now; I will request you also to observe that I did not surmise—that Mr. Coningham, indeed, did not hint to me of more than two sittings, and that to you at starting I stated expressly that I could undertake for no more. Such, according to my memory of them, are the facts. Nevertheless, if three hours more of my time, divided into "two more sittings," are really of importance to you, it seems churlish to refuse them. I am engaged for Friday or Saturday—I know not yet which. Let Mr. Coningham come down for me any other day at two o'clock, and you shall have me for an hour and a half; and then again any second day in the like fashion; and after that I wish to have it distinctly understood that I have done with the business, and really cannot attend to it, late or early, any farther.

'Believe me always,

'Faithfully yours,

'T. CARLYLE.'

In 1836 Linnell lost his father, who died at the end of October, and was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery on November 8. It seems like a bit of quaint satire to learn that the artist was obliged to read the Funeral Service over his parent's grave himself, because there was no one else to perform the rite. The ground in which the grave was dug

being unconsecrated, the clergyman of the place would not officiate, and the Dissenting minister was absent from home, and therefore could not.

This was one of the very few occasions on which Linnell attended a funeral. He had a great objection to doing so, and acted all his life very much on the precept, ‘Let the dead bury their dead.’ Serious and religious as he was, he disliked anything lugubrious, and had no sympathy with the studied dolefulness of conventional mourning. His convictions led him to regard death rather as a joyful event than otherwise ; but, in any case, it was to his mind too solemn a matter for the ceremoniousness and the mockery, as he considered it, with which it is too often surrounded. His religion was one of joyousness and hope, and he encouraged cheerfulness and innocent delight on all occasions. ‘Tell me not of death,’ he says in one of his poetic pieces :

‘Tell me not of death, of churchyards, and God’s acre,
I’m in love with life, sweet maid, and I will take her
As she is given me from her Father’s portal,
To be mine for ever, making me immortal.
Let the dead bury the dead, and o’er corruption linger.
I will heed them not, unless to point my finger
In mockery of their processions and paradings,
Their ostentation and their masqueradings.
Ah ! when will man perceive the glorious truth,
That death’s the road to everlasting youth—
Youth of the soul. The body which decays
Is nothing—food for worms. But future days
Will sure reveal the form that God will give
To each saved soul his truth has caused to live.
The whole creation groaneth for that blest hour,
When bodies sown in weakness shall be raised in power.’

This disposition of mind explains his attitude towards art. Into all that he did he infused this spirit of joyousness. He never touches a morbid or a vulgar subject—rarely a melancholy one. His brush is at its strongest when he is depicting the joyousness of nature, the joyousness of labour, the joyousness of children at play. He had a great antipathy to much of the work of the modern French school on this account, considering it degrading to art to delight in the portrayal of horrors. He had a similar objection to the imitation of antiquated art, which he considered unreal, and in its way as unwholesome as the depicting of horrible scenes.

In his own choice of subjects he was guided by the desire to give delight and induce thankfulness. He aimed at being true; and though he threw as much poetry into his subjects as he could, he never overstepped the bounds of fidelity. In all this he was guided not only by the higher motives of sincerity and truth, but also by a shrewd business tact which told him that people would be most likely to buy that which gave them pleasure.

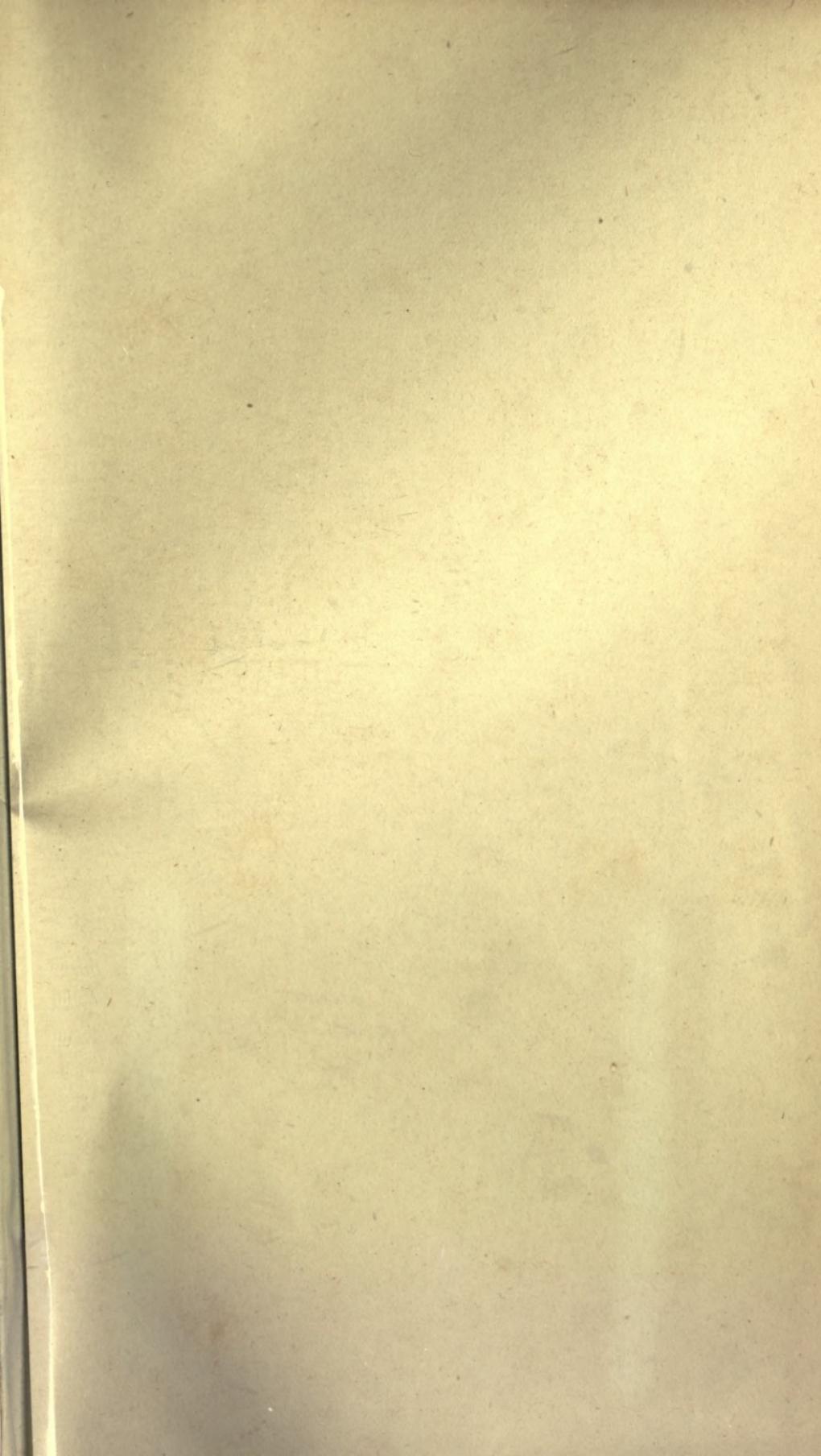
The artist has expressed these views in one of his short poems. It would not be easy to find anywhere fifteen lines in which there is combined so much humour, piety, love of nature, and ‘business,’ as in the following :

‘I said, Though polar bears their thousands bring,
And art mediæval’s thought the very thing ;
Yet I will paint the dainty spring,

The summer and the autumn sky,
With the fields and hills
Whose glory fills
My heart with ecstasy ;
I'll paint the reapers in the harvest field,
At work or rest, for both will yield
Pictures of happiness and bounteous love,
Bestowed on just and unjust from above ;
All these I'll paint, at least, I'll try.
But if I do—oh, tell me true !—
Do you think anyone will buy ?
And echo softly answers, “ By-and-by ! ”

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END OF VOL. I.





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